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THE WORKS

OF

JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

VOL. II.

THE WORKS

OF

JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

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SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.

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SERMONS.

SUMMARY OF SERMON VIII.

ROMANS, CHAP. VI.—VERSE 21.

PART I.

THE son of Sirach prudently advised, concerning judgment made of the felicity or infelicity of men, *Judge none blessed before his death; for a man shall be known in his children.* This thought dilated on; and various instances of profligate unworthy descendants of great and virtuous parents quoted: so that he who is cursed in his children cannot be reckoned among the fortunate.

What is here said concerning families in general is most remarkable in the retinue and family of sin: for it keeps a good house, which is full of company and servants; it is served by the possessions of the world, courted by the unhappy, flattered by fools, made the end of human designs, and feasted all the way of its progress, &c.

But then if we look to what are the children of this splendid family, and see what issue sin produces, it may help to untie the charm. Sin and concupiscence marry together, and feast highly: but the children of their filthy union are ugly and deformed, foolish and ill-natured: the Apostle calls them *shame and death.* These are the fruits of sin, *the apples of Sodom;* fair on the outside, but within full of ashes and rot-

tenness. And the tree with its fruits go together: if you will have the mother, you must take the daughters. *What fruit had ye then?* That is the question.

In answer to which we are to consider, 1. what is the sum total of the pleasures of sin: 2. what fruits and relishes it leaves behind by its natural efficiency: 3. what are its consequences by its demerit, and the superadded wrath of God, which it hath deserved.

1. If then it be considered what pleasures there are in sin, most of them will be found to be very punishments. To pass over the miseries ensuing from envy, or murder, or a whole catalogue of sins, every one of which is a disease in its constitution and nature, we may observe, that nothing pretends to pleasure but the lust of the flesh, ambition, and revenge: these alone cozen us with a fair outside; and yet, on a survey of their fruits, we shall see how miserably they deceive us.

2. For a man cannot take pleasure in the lusts of the flesh, unless he be helped forward by inconsideration and folly. We see evidently that grave and wise persons, men of experience and consideration, are extremely less affected with lust and loves, &c. than the hair-brained boy: this topic dilated on.

3. The pleasures of intemperance are nothing but the relics and images of pleasure, after that nature hath been feasted: for as long as she needs, and as long as temperance waits, so long pleasure also stands by: but as temperance begins to go away, having done the ministries of nature, every morsel, and every fresh goblet, is still less delicious, and cannot be endured, but as men force nature by violence to stay longer than she would: this topic enlarged on; and the fatal effects of intemperance described.

4. With pretenders to pleasure there is so much trouble to bring them to act an enjoyment, that the appetite is above half tired before it comes. It is necessary that a man should be wonderfully patient who is ambitious; and no one buys death

and damnation at so dear a rate as he who fights for it, enduring heat and cold, and hunger; and who practises all the austerities of the hermit, with this difference; that the one does it for heavenly glory, the other for uncertain honor and an eternity of flames: this passion farther dilated on; and that of revenge discussed, which is pleasant only to a devil, or to a man who has the same accursed temper.

5. These sins, when they are entertained with the greatest fondness from without, must have very little pleasure, because there is a strong faction against them: something that is within strives against the entertainment; and they sit uneasy on the spirit, when the man is vexed that they are not lawful: this illustrated, &c.

6. The pleasure in the acts of these few sins that do pretend to it, is a little limited nothing, confined to a single faculty, to one sense, &c. and that which is the instrument of sense, is the means of its torment: by the faculty through which it tastes, by the same it is afflicted; for so long as it can taste, it is tormented with desire; and when it can desire no longer, it cannot feel pleasure.

7. Sin hath little or no pleasure in its very enjoyment, because its very manner of entry and production is by a curse and a contradiction: it comes into the world like a viper, through the sides of its mother, by means violent and monstrous: this enlarged on.

8. The pleasures in the very enjoyment of sin are infinitely trifling and inconsiderable, because they pass away so quickly: if they be in themselves little, this makes them still less; but if they were great, this would not only lessen the delight, but change it into torment, and load the sinner's spirit with impatience and indignation: this dilated on.

9. Sin hath in its best advantages but a trifling, inconsiderable pleasure: because not only God and reason, conscience, honor, interest, and laws do sour it; but even the devil him-

self, overruled by God, or by a strange malice, makes it troublesome and intricate; so that one sin contracts another, and vexes the man with a variety of evils, &c.

10. Sin has so little true relish, and so trifling a pleasure, that it is always greater in expectation than it is in the possession. If men could see this beforehand, they would never pursue it so eagerly.

11. The fruits of its present possession, the pleasures of its taste, are less pleasant, because no sober person, no man that can discourse, likes it long. He approves it in the height of passion, and under the disguise of a temptation; but at all other times he finds it ugly and unreasonable: the remembrance at all times abates its pleasures and sours its delicacies: this topic dilated on. Concluding remarks.

PART II.

II. Second general consideration. What fruits and relishes sin leaves behind by its natural efficiency. These are so many, as must needs affright the soul, and scare the confidence of every considerate person.

It is said that our blessed Saviour shall present his church to God *without spot or wrinkle.* Many have been the opinions concerning the nature of that spot or stain of sin: these recounted. But it is not a distinct thing, or inherent quality, that can be separated from the other evil effects of sin, which St. Paul comprises under the scornful appellation of *shame*: these now reckoned by their more proper names.

1. The first natural fruit of sin is ignorance. Man was first tempted by the promise of knowlege: he fell into darkness by believing that the devil held forth to him a new light. It was not likely that good should come from so foul a beginning: the man and the woman already knew good; and all that was offered to them was the experience of evil. Now this know-

lege was the introduction of ignorance: when the understanding suffered itself to be so baffled as to study evil, the will was so foolish as to fall in love with it; and they conspired to undo each other. For when the will began to love it, then the understanding was set on work to commend, advance, approve, believe it, and to be factious in behalf of the new purchase.

It is not here meant that the understanding of man received any natural diminution; but it received impediment by new propositions: it lost and willingly forgot what God had taught, went from the fountain of truth, and gave trust to the father of lies. The devil indeed grew more quicksighted in abusing us; but we became more blind by that opening of our eyes.

The philosophy of this mischief, or the connexion of causes between sin and ignorance, may be omitted: but it is certain, that whether a man would fain be pleased with sin, or continue quiet under it, or persuade others to be so, he must do it by false propositions, &c. Who in the world is a greater fool, a more ignorant and wretched man, than an atheist? The folly of such a person descanted on.

But though the devil never prevailed to a great extent in this, yet he has in a thing almost as senseless as atheism, and that is idolatry; which not only makes God after man's own image, but in the likeness of a calf, a cat, or a serpent; nay, makes man to worship a quartan ague, fire, water, onions, and sheep. This is the philosophy which man learned of the devil. What wisdom can there be in any one who calls good evil, and evil good; that says fire is cold, and the sun black; that fornication can make a man happy, or drunkenness make him wise? And yet this is the state of a sinner who delights in iniquity: he cannot be pleased with it if he thinks it evil; he cannot endure it, without believing this proposition, That there is in lust or drunkenness, pleasure and good enough to make amends for the intolerable pains of damnation: this enlarged on. Such is the

sinner's philosophy. And no wiser are his hopes: he hopes without a promise, and believes that he shall have mercy for which he never had a revelation.

There are some sins whose very formality is a lie. Superstition could not exist, if men believed that God was good and wise, free and merciful: no man would dare to do in private, what he fears to do publicly, if he knew and thought that God sees him there, and will bring that work of darkness into light, &c.

We need not thrust into this account other evils that are the events of ignorance, but introduced by sin; such as are, our being moved by what we see strongly, and weakly by what we understand; by fables rather than syllogisms, by parables than by demonstrations, by examples than precepts, by shadows than by substances: this topic enlarged on and illustrated.

2. Sin naturally makes a man weak, that is, unapt to do noble things; by which is not understood a natural disability; for it is equally ready for a man to will good as well as evil; and the understanding is convinced, and the hand can obey, and the passions can be directed to God's service: but because they are not used to it, the will finds a difficulty to do them violence, &c. There is a law in the members, and he that gave that law is a tyrant, and the subjects of it are slaves: this subject enlarged on; and the difficulty of breaking loose from wicked habits shown. Two things instanced, which seem great aggravations of the slavery and weakness of a customary sinner.

1. The first is, that men sin against their interest: they know they shall be ruined by it; that it will undo their estates, ruin their fortunes, destroy their body, impoverish their spirit, confound their reason, and destroy their hopes; but the evil custom still remains.

2. The second is, that custom prevails against experience. Though the man hath already smarted, though he hath been disgraced and undone, though he is turned out of service and un-

employed, though he begs with a load of old sins on his back, yet this will not cure an evil custom: this topic dilated on.

Now this is such a state of slavery, that persons who are sensible, ought to complain that they serve lords worse than Egyptian task-masters. The abject slavery of sinners exemplified in various instances.

3. Sin naturally introduces a great baseness on the spirit, expressed in Scripture sometimes, by the devil's entering into a man; as in the case of Judas. So St. Cyprian speaks of those who after baptism lapsed into foul crimes. Men fall by this means into sins, of which there can be no reason given, which no excuse can lessen, which are set off by no pleasure, advanced by no temptation, and which deceive by no allurements: instances of such given. Progress of a sinner, and the wretched state of a confirmed one described.

PART III.

Although these are shameful effects of sin, and a man need no greater dishonor than to be a fool, a slave, and a base person, yet there are some sins which are directly shameful in their nature and proper disrepute: a great many are the worst and basest in several respects; that is, every one of them has a venomous quality of its own. Thus the devil's sin was the worst, because it came from the greatest malice; Adam's, because it was of most universal dissemination; Judas's, because it was against the most excellent person: this topic enlarged on. There is a strange poison in the nature of sin, that of so many sorts, every one of them should be the worst. Every sin has an evil spirit of its own, to manage, to conduct, and to embitter it: yet to some sins shame is more appropriate, and a proper ingredient in their constitution: such are lying, and lust, and vow-breaking, and inconstancy. Lust makes a man afraid of public eyes and common voices; it is a work of

darkness; it debauches the spirit, and makes it to fall off from courage, resolution, constancy, and freedom. The shame which attends this vice more fully dilated on.

We see the existence of this degeneracy in sad experience. What arguments, what preaching, what necessity can persuade men to confess their sins? So ashamed are they, that they prefer concealing them before their remedy; although in penitential confession the shame is going off: but such is the fate of sin, that the shame grows more and more; we lie to men, and we excuse it to God.

If then we remember how ambitious we are for fame, honor, and reputation all our days, and when our days are gone; and that no ingenuous man can enjoy any thing if he lives in disgrace, let us consider, what an evil condition we are put into by sin; which renders us not only disparaged and despised here, but unpitied and dishonored in our graves; where indeed our disgrace will not sleep, but will cover us with shame and confusion, in the sight of men and angels, before the tribunal of God. Dreadful state of the sinner at that time dilated on.

III. Third general consideration. There is one other great circumstance of the shame of sin, which enlarges the evil of it; the added wrath of God. The rod of God, which 'cometh not into the lot of the righteous,' strikes the sinner with sore strokes of vengeance.

1. The first of these noticed, is that aggravation of the shame of sin, which consists in the impossibility of concealment, in most cases of heinous crimes. No wicked man that dwelt and delighted in sin, did ever go off from the scene of his unworthiness without a vile character: the intolerable apprehensions of sinners themselves, and the slightest circumstances lay open the cabinet of sin, and bring to light all that was transacted behind the curtains of night: this topic enlarged on and illustrated.

2. A second superinduced consequence of sin, brought on it

by the wrath of God, is sin. When God punishes sin with sin, he is extremely angry; for then the punishment is not medicinal, but final and exterminating. One evil invites another; and when God is angry, and withdraws his grace, and the Holy Spirit is grieved, and departs from his dwelling, the man is left at the mercy of the merciless enemy, who will receive him only with variety of mischiefs: the terrible state of such a sinner commented on.

3. Sin brings in its retinue fearful plagues and evil angels, messengers of the displeasure of God: of this the experience is so great and the examples so frequent, that it need not be dilated on. But one thing is remarkable; that God, even when he forgives the sin, reserves such remains of punishment, even to the best persons, as to show that every sinner is in a worse condition than he dreams of. Instances of this in the case of David, Zedekiah, and others, from profane history, &c. So much, and more is due to sin: and though Christ hath redeemed our souls, so that, if we repent, we shall not die eternally, yet he hath no where promised that we shall not be smitten.

Two appendages to this consideration. 1. That there are some mischiefs which are the proper and appointed scourges of certain sins: each has a punishment of its own which usually attends it, as giddiness does a drunkard: this enlarged on and illustrated. 2. That there are some states of sin, which expose a man to all mischief, by taking off every guard and defence, driving the good spirit from him, and stripping him of the guardianship of angels. This is the effect of habitual sin, of an evil course of life; and it is called in Scripture *a grieving of the good Spirit of God:* this dilated on. Concluding remarks on the deadly nature and lamentable evils of sin.

SERMON VIII.

APPLES OF SODOM; OR, THE FRUITS OF SIN.

ROMANS, CHAP. VI.—VERSE 21.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

PART I.

THE son of Sirach did prudently advise concerning making judgments of the felicity or infelicity of men; 'Judge none blessed before his death; for a man shall be known in his children.'* Some men raise their fortunes from a cottage to the chairs of princes, from a sheep-cote to a throne, and dwell in the circles of the sun, and in the lap of prosperity; their wishes and success dwell under the same roof, and Providence brings all events into their design, and ties both ends together with prosperous successes; and even the little conspersions and intertextures of evil accidents in their lives, are but like a feigned note of music, by an artificial discord making the ear covetous, and then pleased with the harmony into which the appetite was enticed by passion, and a pretty restraint; and variety does but adorn prosperity, and make it of a sweeter relish, and of more advantages; and some of these men descend into their graves without a change of fortune.

Eripitur persona, manet res.

* Ecclus. xi. 28.

Indeed, they cannot longer dwell on the estate, but that remains unrifled, and descends on their heir, and all is well till the next generation; but if the evil of his death, and the change of his present prosperity for an intolerable danger of an uncertain eternity, does not sour his full chalice; yet if his children prove vicious or degenerous, cursed or unprosperous, we account the man miserable, and his grave to be strewed with sorrows and dishonors. The wise and valiant Chabrias grew miserable by the folly of his son Ctesippus; and the reputation of brave Germanicus began to be ashamed, when the base Caligula entered on his scene of dishonorable crime. Commodus, the wanton and feminine son of wise Antoninus, gave a check to the great name of his father; and when the son of Hortensius Corbio was prostitute, and the heir of Q. Fabius Maximus was disinherited by the sentence of the city prætor, as being unworthy to enter into the fields of his glorious father, and young Scipio the son of Africanus was a fool and a prodigal; posterity did weep afresh over the monuments of their brave progenitors, and found that infelicity can pursue a man, and overtake him in his grave.

This is a great calamity when it falls on innocent persons: and that Moses died on Mount Nebo, in the sight of Canaan, was not so great an evil, as that his sons Eliezer and Gerson were unworthy to succeed him; but that priesthood was devolved to his brother, and the principality to his servant; and to Samuel, that his sons proved corrupt, and were exauthorated for their unworthiness, was an allay to his honor and his joys, and such as proclaims to all the world, that the measures of our felicity are not to be taken by the lines of our own person, but of our relations too; and he that is cursed in his children, cannot be reckoned among the fortunate.

This which I have discoursed concerning families in general, is most remarkable in the retinue and family of sin; for it keeps a good house, and is full of company and servants, it is served by the possessions of the world, it is courted by the unhappy, flattered by fools, taken into the bosom by the effeminate, made the end of human designs, and feasted all the way of its progress: wars are made for its interest, and men give or venture their lives that their sin may be prosperous; all the outward

senses are its handmaids, and the inward senses are of its privy-chamber; the understanding is its counsellor, the will its friend, riches are its ministers, nature holds up its train, and art is its emissary to promote its interest and affairs abroad: and, on this account, all the world is enrolled in its taxing-tables, and are subjects or friends of its kingdom, or are so kind to it as to make too often visits, and to lodge in its borders; because all men stare on its pleasures, and are inticed to taste of its wanton delicacies. But then if we look what are the children of this splendid family, and see what issue sin produces, ἐστὶ γὰρ τέκνα καὶ τῷδε,—it may help to untie the charm. Sin and concupiscence marry together, and riot and feast it high; but their fruits, the children and production of their filthy union, are ugly and deformed, foolish and ill-natured; and the Apostle calls them by their name, 'shame,' and 'death.' These are the fruits of sin, 'the apples of Sodom,' fair outsides, but if you touch them, they turn to ashes and a stink; and if you will nurse these children, and give them whatsoever is dear to you, then you may be admitted into the house of feasting, and chambers of riot where sin dwells; but if you will have the mother, you must have the daughters; the tree and the fruits go together; and there is none of you all that ever entered into this house of pleasure, but he left the skirts of his garment in the hands of shame, and had his name rolled in the chambers of death. 'What fruit had ye then?' that is the question.

In answer to which question, we are to consider, 1. What is the sum total of the pleasure of sin. 2. What fruits and relishes it leaves behind by its natural efficiency. 3. What are its consequents by its demerit, and the infliction of the superadded wrath of God, which it hath deserved. Of the first St. Paul gives no account; but by way of upbraiding asks, 'what they had?' that is, nothing that they dare own, nothing that remains: and where is it? show it; what is become of it? Of the second he gives the sum total: all its natural effects are 'shame' and its appendages. The third, or the superinduced evils by the just wrath of God, he calls 'death,' the worst name in itself, and the greatest of evils that can happen.

1. Let us consider what pleasures there are in sin; most of them are very punishments. I will not reckon or consider concerning envy, which one in Stobæus* calls κάκιστον καὶ δικώτατον θεὸν, "the basest spirit, and yet very just;" because it punishes the delinquent in the very act of sin, doing as Ælian says of the polypus, εἴτις αὐτῷ γένηται ἀθηρία, τῶν ἑαυτοῦ πλοκάμων παρέτραγε, "when he wants his prey, he devours his own arms; (i. 27.)" and the leanness, and the secret pangs, and the perpetual restlessness of an envious man, feed on his own heart, and drink down his spirits, unless he can ruin or observe the fall of the fairest fortunes of his neighbor. The fruits of this tree are mingled and sour, and not to be endured in the very eating. Neither will I reckon the horrid affrightments and amazements of murder, nor the uneasiness of impatience, which doubles every evil that it feels, and makes it a sin, and makes it intolerable; nor the secret grievings and continual troubles of peevishness, which makes a man incapable of receiving good, or delighting in beauties and fair intreaties, in the mercies of God and charities of men.

It were easy to make a catalogue of sins, every one of which is a disease, a trouble in its very constitution and its nature: such are loathing of spiritual things, bitterness of spirit, rage, greediness, confusion of mind, and irresolution, cruelty and despite, slothfulness and distrust, unquietness and anger, effeminacy and niceness, prating and sloth, ignorance and inconstancy, incogitancy and cursing, malignity and fear, forgetfulness and rashness, pusillanimity and despair, rancor and superstition: if a man were to curse his enemy, he could not wish him a greater evil than these: and yet these are several kinds of sin which men choose, and give all their hopes of heaven in exchange for one of these diseases. Is it not a fearful consideration, that a man should rather choose eternally to perish than to say his prayers heartily and affectionately? but so it is with very many men; they are driven to their devotions by custom, and shame, and reputation, and civil compliances; they sigh and look sour when they are called to it, and abide there as a man under the chirurgeon's hands, smarting and

* Floril. tit. 38.

fretting all the while; or else he passes the time with incogitancy, and hates the employment, and suffers the torment of prayers which he loves not; and all this, although for so doing it is certain he may perish: what fruit, what deliciousness, can he fancy in being weary of his prayers? there is no pretence or color for these things. Can any man imagine a greater evil to the body and soul of a man than madness, and furious eyes, and a distracted look, paleness with passion, and trembling hands and knees, and furiousness, and folly in the heart and head? and yet this is the pleasure of anger, and for this pleasure men choose damnation. But it is a great truth that there are but very few sins that pretend to pleasure: although a man be weak and soon deceived, and the devil is crafty, and sin is false and impudent, and pretences are too many,—yet most kinds of sins are real and prime troubles to the very body, without all manner of deliciousness, even to the sensual, natural, and carnal part; and a man must put on something of a devil before he can choose such sins, and he must love mischief because it is a sin; for in most instances there is no other reason in the world. Nothing pretends to pleasure but the lust of the lower belly, ambition, and revenge; and although the catalogue of sins is numerous as the production of fishes, yet these three only can be apt to cozen us with a fair outside; and yet, on the survey of what fruits they bring, and what taste they have in the manducation, besides the filthy relish they leave behind, we shall see how miserably they are abused and fooled, that expend any thing on such purchases.

2. For a man cannot take pleasure in lusts of the flesh, in gluttony, or drunkenness, unless he be helped forward with inconsideration and folly. For we see it evidently that grave and wise persons, men of experience and consideration, are extremely less affected with lust and loves than the hare-brained boy; the young gentleman that thinks nothing in the world greater than to be free from a tutor, he indeed courts his folly, and enters into the possession of lust without abatement; consideration dwells not there: but when a sober man meets with a temptation, and is helped by his natural temper, or invited by his course of life; if he can consider, he hath so many objections and fears, so many difficulties and impediments, such

sharp reasonings and sharper jealousies concerning its event, that if he does at all enter into folly, it pleases him so little, that he is forced to do it in despite of himself; and the pleasure is so allayed, that he knows not whether it be wine or vinegar; his very apprehension and instruments of relish are filled with fear and contradicting principles, and the deliciousness does but *affricare cutem*, it went "but to the skin;" but the allay went farther; it kept a guard within, and suffered the pleasure to pass no farther. A man must resolve to be a fool, a rash inconsiderate person, or he will feel but little satisfaction in the enjoyment of his sin: indeed, he that stops his nose, may drink down such corrupted waters; and he understood it well who chose rather to be a fool,

> Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,
> Quam sapere et ringi. Hor. Ep. ii. 2. 127.

"so that his sins might delight him, or deceive him, than to be wise and without pleasure in the enjoyment." So that in effect a man must lose his discerning faculties before he discerns the little fantastic joys of his concupiscence; which demonstrates how vain, how empty of pleasure that is, that is beholden to folly and illusion, to a juggling and a plain cozenage, before it can be fancied to be pleasant. For it is a strange beauty, that he that hath the best eyes cannot perceive, and none but the blind or blear-eyed people can see; and such is the pleasure of lust, which, by every degree of wisdom that a man hath, is lessened and undervalued.

3. For the pleasures of intemperance, they are nothing but the relics and images of pleasure, after that nature hath been feasted; for so long as she needs, that is, so long as temperance waits, so long pleasure also stands there; but as temperance begins to go away, having done the ministries of nature, every morsel, and every new goblet, is still less delicious, and cannot be endured but as men force nature by violence to stay longer than she would. How have some men rejoiced when they have escaped a cup! and when they cannot escape, they pour it in, and receive it with as much pleasure as the old women have in the Lapland dances; they dance the round, but there is a horror and a harshness in the music; and they call it pleasure,

because men bid them do so: but there is a devil in the company, and such as is his pleasure, such is theirs: he rejoices in the thriving sin, and the swelling fortune of his darling drunkenness, but his joys are the joys of him that knows and always remembers, that he shall infallibly have the biggest damnation; and then let it be considered how forced a joy that is, that is at the end of an intemperate feast.

> Nec bene mendaci risus componitur ore,
> Nec bene sollicitis ebria verba sonant.*

Certain it is, intemperance takes but nature's leavings; when the belly is full, and nature calls to take away, the pleasure that comes in afterward, is next to loathing: it is like the relish and taste of meats at the end of the third course, or sweetness of honey to him that hath eaten till he can endure to take no more; and in this there is no other difference of these men from them that die on another cause, than was observed among the Phalangia of old, *τὰ μὲν ποιεῖ γελῶντας ἀποθνήσκειν, τὰ δὲ κλαίοντας*, "some of these men make men die laughing, and some to die weeping:" so does the intemperate, and so does his brother that languishes of a consumption; this man dies weeping, and the other dies laughing; but they both die infallibly, and all his pleasure is nothing but the sting of a serpent, *immixto liventia mella veneno*, it wounds the heart, and he dies with a tarantula, dancing and singing till he bows his neck, and kisses his bosom with the fatal noddings and declensions of death.

4. In these pretenders to pleasure (which you see are but few, and they not very prosperous in their pretences), there is mingled so much trouble to bring them to act an enjoyment, that the appetite is above half tired before it comes; it is necessary a man should be hugely patient that is ambitious, *ambulare per Britannos, Scythicas pati pruinas:* no man buys death and damnation at so dear a rate, as he that fights for it, and endures cold and hunger,—*patiens liminis et solis*, "the heat of the sun, and the cold of the threshold;" the dangers of war, and the snares of a crafty enemy: he lies on the ground

* Tibullus, iii. 6. 35. Heyne, p. 219.

with a severity greater than the penances of a hermit, and fasts beyond the austerity of a rare penitent; with this only difference, that the one does it for heaven, and the other for an uncertain honor, and an eternity of flames. But, however, by this time that he hath won something, he hath spent some years, and he hath not much time left him to rest in his new purchase, and he hath worn out his body, and lessened his capacity of feeling it; and although it is ten to one he cannot escape all the dangers he must venture at, that he may come near his trifle, yet, when he is arrived thither, he can never long enjoy, nor well perceive or taste it; and, therefore, there are more sorrows at the gate, than there can dwell comforts in all the rooms of the houses of pride and great designs. And thus it is in revenge, which is pleasant only to a devil, or a man of the same cursed temper. He does a thing which ought to trouble him, and will move him to pity, what his own vile hands have acted; but if he does not pity, that is, be troubled with himself, and wish the things undone, he hath those affections by which the devil doth rejoice in destroying souls; which affections a man cannot have, unless he be perfectly miserable, by being contrary to God, to mercy, and to felicity; and, after all, the pleasure is false, fantastic, and violent, it can do him no good, it can do him hurt, it is odds but it will; and on him that takes revenge, revenge shall be taken, and by a real evil he shall dearly pay for the goods that are but airy and fantastical; it is like a rolling stone, which, when a man hath forced up a hill, will return on him with a greater violence, and break those bones whose sinews gave it motion. The pleasure of revenge is like the pleasure of eating chalk and coals; a foolish disease made the appetite, and it is entertained with an evil reward; it is like the feeding of a cancer or a wolf; the man is restless till it be done, and when it is, every man sees how infinitely he is removed from satisfaction or felicity.

5. These sins, when they are entertained with the greatest fondness from without, must have an extreme little pleasure, because there is a strong faction, and the better party against them: something that is within contests against the entertainment, and they sit uneasily on the spirit when the man is vexed

that they are not lawful. The Persian king gave Themistocles a goodly pension, assigning Magnesia with the revenue of fifty talents for his bread, Lampsacum for his wine, and Myos for his meat; but all the while he fed high and drunk deep, he was infinitely afflicted that every thing went cross to his undertaking, and he could not bring his ends about to betray his country; and at last he mingled poison with his wine and drank it off, having first intreated his friends to steal for him a private grave in his own country. Such are the pleasures of the most pompous and flattering sins: their meat and drink are good and pleasant at first, and it is plenteous and criminal; but its employment is base, it is so against a man's interest, and against what is, and ought to be, dearest to him, that he cannot persuade his better parts to consent, but must fight against them and all their arguments. These things are against a man's conscience, that is, against his reason and his rest: and something within makes his pleasure sit uneasily. But so do violent perfumes make the head ache, and therefore wise persons reject them; and the eye refuses to stare on the beauties of the sun, because it makes it weep itself blind; and if a luscious dish please my palate, and turns to loathing in the stomach, I will lay aside that evil, and consider the danger and the bigger pain, not that little pleasure. So it is in sin; it pleases the senses, but diseases the spirit, and wounds that: and that it is apt to smart as the skin, and is as considerable in the provisions of pleasure and pain respectively; and the pleasure of sin to a contradicting reason, is like the joys of wine to a condemned man,

——— Difficile est imitari gaudia falsa;
Difficile est tristi fingere mente jocum. (Tibull.)

It will be very hard to delight freely in that which so vexes the more tender and most sensible part; so that, what Pliny said of the poppies growing in the river Caicus, ἔχει ἀντὶ καρποῦ λίθον, "it brings a stone instead of a flower or fruit;" so are the pleasures of these pretending sins; the flower at the best is stinking, but there is a stone in the bottom; it is gravel in the teeth, and a man must drink the blood of his own gums when he manducates such unwholesome, such unpleasant fruit.

——— vitiorum gaudia vulnus habent;

They make a wound, and therefore are not very pleasant. Τὸ γὰρ ζῆν μὴ καλῶς, μέγας πόνος, "It is a great labor and travail to live a vicious life."

6. The pleasure in the acts of these few sins that do pretend to it, is a little limited nothing, confined to a single faculty, to one sense, having nothing but the skin for its organ or instrument, an artery, or something not more considerable than a lute-string; and at the best, it is but the satisfaction of an appetite which reason can cure, which time can appease, which every diversion can take off; such as is not perfective of his nature, nor of advantage to his person; it is a desire to no purpose, and as it comes with no just cause, so can be satisfied with no just measures; it is satisfied before it comes to a vice, and when it is come thither, all the world cannot satisfy it: a little thing will weary it, but nothing can content it. For all these sensual desires are nothing but an impatience of being well and wise, of being in health, and being in our wits; which two things if a man could endure, (and it is but reasonable, a man would think, that we should) he would never lust to drown his heart in seas of wine, or oppress his belly with loads of undigested meat, or make himself base by the mixtures of a harlot, by breaking the sweetest limits and holy festivities of marriage. *Malum impatientia est boni*, said Tertullian, it is nothing else; to please the sense is but to do a man's self mischief; and all those lusts tend to some direct dissolution of a man's health or his felicity, his reason or his religion; it is an enemy that a man carries about him: and as the Spirit of God said concerning Babylon, *Quantum in deliciis fuit, tantum date illi tormentum et luctum*, 'Let her have torment and sorrow according to the measure of her delights,' is most eminently true in the pleasing of our senses; the lust and desire is a torment, the remembrance and the absence is a torment, and the enjoyment does not satisfy, but disables the instrument, and tires the faculty; and when a man hath but a little of what his sense covets, he is not contented, but impatient for more; and when he hath loads of it, he does not feel it. For he that swallows a full goblet does not taste his wine: and this is the

pleasure of the sense; nothing contents it but that which he cannot perceive; and it is always restless, till it be weary; and all the way unpleased, till it can feel no pleasure; and that which is the instrument of sense, is the means of its torment; by the faculty by which it tastes, by the same it is afflicted; for so long as it can taste, it is tormented with desire; and when it can desire no longer, it cannot feel pleasure.

7. Sin hath little or no pleasure in its very enjoyment: because its very manner of entry and production is by a curse and a contradiction: it comes into the world like a viper through the sides of its mother, by means unnatural, violent, and monstrous. Men love sin only because it is forbidden; 'Sin took occasion by the law,' saith St. Paul; it could not come in on its own pretences, but men rather suspect secret pleasure in it because there are guards kept on it.

> Sed quia cæcus inest vitiis amor, omne futurum
> Despicitur, suadentque brevem præsentia fructum,
> Et ruit in vetitum damni secura libido.

Men run into sin with blind affections, and against all reason despise the future, hoping for some little pleasure for the present; and all this is only because they are forbidden: do not many men sin out of spite? Some out of the spirit of disobedience, some by wildness and indetermination, some by imprudence, and because they are taken in a fault;

> ————frontemque a crimine sumunt;

some because they are reproved; many by custom, others by importunity:

> Ordo fuit crevisse malis————.

It grows on crab-stocks, and the lust itself is sour and unwholesome: and since it is evident that very many sins come in wholly on these accounts, such persons and such sins cannot pretend pleasure; but as naturalists say of pulse, *cum maledictis et probris serendum præcipiunt, ut lætius proveniat:* "the country-people were used to curse it, and rail on it all the while that it was sowing, that it might thrive the better;" it is true with sins, they grow up with curses, with spite and

contradiction, peevishness and indignation, pride and cursed principles; and therefore pleasure ought not to be the inscription of the box; for that is the least part of its ingredient and constitution.

8. The pleasures in the very enjoying of sin are infinitely trifling and inconsiderable, because they pass away so quickly: if they be in themselves little, they are made less by their volatile and fugitive nature; but if they are great, then their being so transient does not only lessen the delight, but changes it into a torment, and loads the spirit of the sinner with impatience and indignation. Is it not a high upbraiding to the watchful adulterer, that after he hath contrived the stages of his sin, and tied many circumstances together with arts and labor, and these join and stand knit and solid only by contingency, and are very often borne away with the impetuous torrent of an inevitable accident, like Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont; and then he is to begin again, and sets new wheels a-going; and by the arts, and the labor, and the watchings, and the importunity, and the violence, and the unwearied study, and indefatigable diligence of many months, he enters on possession, and finds them not of so long abode as one of his cares, which in so vast numbers made so great a portion of his life afflicted? Πρόσκαιρον ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, 'the enjoying of sin for a season,'* St. Paul calls it; he names no pleasures; our English translation uses the word of 'enjoying pleasures;' but if there were any, they were but for that season, that instant, that very transition of the act, which dies in its very birth, and of which we can only say, as the minstrel sung of Pacuvius, when he was carried dead from his supper to his bed, βεβίωκε, βεβίωκε. A man can scarce have time enough to say it is alive, but that it was: *nullo non se die extulit*, "it died every day," it lived never unto life, but lived and died unto death, being its mother and daughter: the man died before the sin did live; and when it had lived, it consigned him to die eternally.

Add to this, that it so passes away that nothing at all remains behind it that is pleasant: it is like the path of an arrow

* Heb. xi. 25.

in the air; the next morning no man can tell what is become of the pleasures of the last night's sin; they are no where but in God's books, deposited in the conscience, and sealed up against the day of dreadful accounts; but as to the man, they are as if they never had been; and then, let it be considered, what a horrible aggravation it will be to the miseries of damnation, that a man shall for ever perish for that which if he looks round about he cannot see, nor tell where it is. "He that dies, dies for that which is not;" and in the very little present he finds it an unrewarding interest, to walk seven days together over sharp stones only to see a place from whence he must come back in an hour. If it goes off presently, it is not worth the labor; if it stays long, it grows tedious; so that it cannot be pleasant if it stays; and if it does not stay, it is not to be valued. *Hæc mala mentis gaudia.* It abides too little a while to be felt, or called pleasure; and if it should abide longer, it would be troublesome as pain, and loathed like the tedious speech of an orator pleading against the life of the innocent.

9. Sin hath in its best advantages but a trifling, inconsiderable pleasure; because not only God and reason, conscience and honor, interest and laws, do sour it in the sense and gust of pleasure, but even the devil himself, either being overruled by God, or by a strange insignificant malice, makes it troublesome and intricate, entangled and involved; and one sin contradicts another, and vexes the man with so great variety of evils, that if in the course of God's service he should meet with half the difficulty, he would certainly give over the whole employment. Those that St. James speaks of, who 'prayed that they might spend it on their lusts,' were covetous and prodigal, and therefore must endure the torments of one to have the pleasure of another; and which is greater, the pleasure of spending, or the displeasure that it is spent and does not still remain after its consumption, is easy to tell: certain it is, that this lasts much longer. Does not the devil often tempt men to despair, and by that torment put bars and locks on them, that they may never return to God? Which what else is it but a plain indication, that it is intended the man should feel the images and dreams of pleasure no longer, but till he be without remedy? Pleasure is but like sentries or wooden frames, set under arches,

till they be strong by their own weight and consolidation to stand alone; and when by any means the devil hath a man sure, he takes no longer care to cozen him with pleasures, but is pleased that men should begin an early hell, and be tormented before the time. Does not envy punish or destroy flattery; and self-love sometimes torment the drunkard; and intemperance abate the powers of lust, and make the man impotent; and laziness become a hinderance to ambition; and the desires of man wax impatient on contradicting interests, and by crossing each other's design on all hands lessen the pleasure, and leave the man tormented?

10. Sin is of so little relish and gust, so trifling a pleasure, that it is always greater in expectation than it is in the possession. But if men did beforehand see, what the utmost is, which sin ministers to please the beastly part of man, it were impossible it should be pursued with so much earnestness and disadvantages. It is necessary it should promise more than it can give; men could not otherwise be cozened. And if it be inquired, why men should sin again, after they had experience of the little and great deception; it is to be confessed, it is a wonder they should: but then we may remember, that men sin again, though their sin did afflict them; they will be drunk again, though they were sick; they will again commit folly, though they be surprised in their shame, though they have needed an hospital; and therefore, there is something else that moves them, and not the pleasure: for they do it without and against its interest; but either they still proceed, hoping to supply by numbers what they find not in proper measures; or God permits them to proceed as an instrument of punishment; or their understandings and reasonings grow cheaper; or they grow in love with it, and take it on any terms; or contract new appetites, and are pleased with the baser and the lower reward of sin: but whatsoever can be the cause of it, it is certain, by the experience of all the world, that the fancy is higher, the desires more sharp, and the reflexion more brisk, at the door and entrance of the entertainment, than in all the little and shorter periods of its possession: for then it is but limited by the natural measures, and abated by distemper, and loathed by enjoying, and disturbed by partners, and dishonored

by shame and evil accidents; so that as men coming to the river Leucos, ἔχει μὲν λευκότατον ὑδάτων καὶ ῥεῖ διειδέστατα, and seeing "waters pure" as the tears of the spring, or the pearls of the morning, expect that in such a fair promising bosom the inmates should be fair and pleasant; τίκτει δὲ ἰχθῦς μελάνας ἰσχυρῶς, but find "the fishes black," filthy, and unwholesome; so it is in sin; its face is fair and beauteous,

> Ἡ τακεραῖς λεύσσουσα κόραις μαλακώτερον ὕπνου,
> Λύσιδος ἁλκυὼν, τερπνὸν ἄθυρμα μέθης.

Softer than sleep, or the dreams of wine, tenderer than the curds of milk; *et Euganea quantumvis mollior agna:* but when you come to handle it, it is filthy, rough as the porcupine, black as the shadows of the night, and having promised a fish it gives a scorpion, and a stone instead of bread.

11. The fruits of its present possession, the pleasures of its taste, are less pleasant, because no sober person, no man that can discourse, does like it long.

> ———breve sit quod turpiter audes. Juv. viii. 165.

He approves it in the height of passion, and in the disguises of a temptation; but at all other times he finds it ugly and unreasonable; and the very remembrances must at all times abate its pleasures and sour its delicacies. In the most parts of a man's life he wonders at his own folly, and prodigious madness, that it should be ever possible for him to be deluded by such trifles; and he sighs next morning, and knows it over-night; and is it not therefore certain, that he leans on a thorn, which he knows will smart, and he dreads the event of to-morrow? But so have I known a bold trooper fight in the confusion of a battle, and being warm with heat and rage, received, from the swords of his enemy, wounds open like a grave; but he felt them not; and when, by the streams of blood, he found himself marked for pain, he refused to consider then what he was to feel to-morrow: but when his rage had cooled into the temper of a man, and clammy moisture had checked the fiery emission of spirits, he wonders at his own boldness, and blames his fate, and needs a mighty patience to bear his great calamity. So is the bold and merry sinner, when he is warm with wine and lust,

wounded and bleeding with the strokes of hell, he twists with the fatal arm that strikes him, and cares not; but yet it must abate his gaiety, because he remembers that when his wounds are cold and considered, he must roar or perish, repent or do worse, that is, be miserable or undone. The Greeks call this *τῶν σάκκων εὐδαιμονίαν*, "the felicity of condemned slaves feasted high in sport." Dion Prusias reports, that when the Persians had got the victory, they would pick out the noblest slave, *καὶ καθίζουσιν εἰς τὸν θρόνον τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ τὴν ἐσθῆτα δίδωσιν τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τρυφᾷν, καὶ παλλακαῖς χρῆσθαι*, "they make him a king for three days, and clothe him with royal robes, and minister to him all the pleasure he can choose, and all the while he knows he is to die a sacrifice to mirth and folly." But then, let it be remembered, what checks and allays of mirth the poor man starts at, when he remembers the axe and the altar where he must shortly bleed; and by this we may understand what that pleasure is, in the midst of which the man sighs deeply, when he considers what opinion he had of this sin in the days of counsel and sober thoughts; and what reason against it he shall feel to-morrow, when he must weep or die. Thus it happens to sinners according to the saying of the prophet, *Qui sacrificant hominem, osculabuntur vitulum*, 'He that gives a man in sacrifice shall kiss the calf;'* that is, shall be admitted to the seventh chapel of Moloch to kiss the idol: a goodly reward for so great a price, for so great an inquiry.

After all this I do not doubt but these considerations will meet with some persons that think them to be *protestatio contra factum*, and fine pretences against all experience; and that, for all these severe sayings, sin is still so pleasant as to tempt the wisest resolution. Such men are in a very evil condition: and in their case only I come to understand the meaning of those words of Seneca; *Malorum ultimum est mala sua amare, ubi turpia non solum delectant, sed etiam placent:* "It is the worst of evils when men are so in love with sin that they are not only delighted with them, but pleased also;" not only feel the relish with too quick a sense, but also feel none of the objections, nothing of the pungency, the sting, or the lessening circum-

* Hosea, xiii. 2.

stances. However, to these men I say this only, that if by experience they feel sin pleasant, it is as certain also by experience, that most sins are in their own nature sharpnesses and diseases; and that very few do pretend to pleasure: that a man cannot feel any deliciousness in them, but when he is helped by folly and inconsideration; that is, a wise man cannot, though a boy or a fool can, be pleased with them: that they are but relics and images of pleasure left on nature's stock, and therefore, much less than the pleasures of natural virtues: that a man must run through much trouble before he brings them to act and enjoyment: that he must take them in despite of himself, against reason and his conscience, the tenderest parts of man and the most sensible of affliction: they are at the best so little, that they are limited to one sense, not spread on all the faculties like the pleasures of virtue, which make the bones fat by an intellectual rectitude, and the eyes sprightly by a wise proposition, and pain itself to become easy by hope and a present rest within: it is certain (I say) by a great experience, that the pleasures of sin enter by cursings and a contradictory interest, and become pleasant, not by their own relish, but by the viciousness of the palate, by spite and peevishness, by being forbidden and unlawful: and that which is its sting is, at some times, the cause of all its sweetness it can have: they are gone sooner than a dream: they are crossed by one another, and their parent is their tormentor: and when sins are tied in a chain, with that chain they dash one another's brains out, or make their lodging restless: it is never liked long, and promises much and performs little; it is great at distance, and little at hand, against the nature of all substantial things; and, after all this, how little pleasure is left, themselves have reason with scorn and indignation to resent. So that, if experience can be pretended against experience, there is nothing to be said to it but the words which Phryne desired to be written on the gates of Thebes, Ἀλέξανδρος κατέσκαψεν, ἀνέστησε δὲ Φρύνη ἡ ἑταίρα, "Phryne the harlot built it up, but Alexander dug it down:" the pleasure is supported by little things, by the experience of fools and them that observed nothing, and the relishes tasted by artificial appetites, by art and cost, by violence and preternatural desires, by the advantage of deception

and evil habits, by expectation and delays, by dreams and inconsiderations: these are the harlot's hands that build the fairy castle; but the hands of reason and religion, sober counsels and the voice of God, experience of wise men and the sighings and intolerable accents of perishing or returning sinners, dig it down, and sow salt in the foundations, that they may never spring up in the accounts of men that delight not in the portion of fools and forgetfulness. *Neque enim Deus ita viventibus quicquam promisit boni; neque ipsa per se mens humana, talium sibi conscia, quicquam boni sperare audet:* "To men that live in sin, God hath promised no good, and the conscience itself dares not expect it."*

SERMON VIII.

PART II.

II. We have already opened this dunghill, covered with snow, which was indeed on the outside white as the spots of leprosy, but it was no better; and if the very colors and instruments of deception, if the fucus and ceruse be so spotted and sullied, what can we suppose to be under the wrinkled skin, what in the corrupted liver, and in the sinks of the body of sin? That we are next to consider: but if we open the body, and see what a confusion of all its parts, what a rebellion and tumult of the humors, what a disorder of the members, what a monstrosity or deformity is all over, we shall be infinitely convinced that no man can choose a sin, but on the same ground on which he may choose a fever, or long for madness or the gout. Sin, in its natural efficiency, hath in it so many evils, as must needs affright a man, and scare the confidence of every one that can consider.

* Plat. de Rep.

When our blessed Saviour shall conduct his church to the mountains of glory, he shall 'present it to God without spot or wrinkle,'* that is, pure and vigorous, intirely freed from the power and the infection of sin. On occasion of which expression it hath been spoken, that sin leaves in the soul a stain or spot, permanent on the spirit, discomposing the order of its beauty, and making it appear to God *in sordibus*, 'in such filthiness,' that he who 'is of pure eyes cannot behold.' But, concerning the nature or proper effects of this spot or stain, they have not been agreed: some call it an obligation or a guilt of punishment; so Scotus. Some fancy it to be an elongation from God, by a dissimilitude of conditions; so Peter Lombard. Alexander of Ales says it is a privation of the proper beauty and splendor of the soul, with which God adorned it in the creation and superaddition of grace; and on this expression they most agree, but seem not to understand what they mean by it; and it signifies no more, but as you, describing sickness, call it a want of health, and folly a want of wisdom; which is indeed to say what a thing is not, but not to tell what it is: but that I may not be hindered by this consideration, we may observe that the spots and stains of sin are metaphorical significations of the disorder and evil consequents of sin; which it leaves partly on the soul, partly on the state and condition of man, as meekness is called an ornament, and faith a shield, and salvation a helmet, and sin itself a wrinkle, corruption, rottenness, a burden,† a wound, death, filthiness: so it is a defiling of a man; that is, as the body contracts nastiness and dishonor by impure contacts and adherences, so does the soul receive such a change as must be taken away before it can enter into the eternal regions, and house of purity. But it is not a distinct thing, not an inherent quality, which can be separated from other evil effects of sin, which I shall now reckon by their more proper names; and St. Paul comprises under the scornful appellative of 'shame.'

1. The first natural fruit of sin is ignorance. Man was first

* Eph. v.

† Κατὰ δ' αἰθάλου
Κηλῖδ' οἰκτρατάταν κέχρωσται, &c. Hecub. 905. Porson.

tempted by the promise of knowlege; he fell into darkness by believing the devil holding forth to him a new light. It was not likely good should come of so foul a beginning; that the woman should believe the devil putting on no brighter shape than a snake's skin, she neither being afraid of sin, nor affrighted to hear a beast speak, and he pretending so weakly in the temptation, that he promised only that they should know evil; for they knew good before; and all that was offered to them was the experience of evil: and it was no wonder that the devil promised no more, for as sin never could perform any thing but an experience of evil, no other knowlege can come on that account; but the wonder was, why the woman should sin for no other reward, but for that which she ought to have feared infinitely; for nothing could have continued her happiness, but not to have known evil. Now this knowlege was the introduction of ignorance. For when the understanding suffered itself to be so baffled as to study evil, the will was as foolish to fall in love with it, and they conspired to undo each other. For when the will began to love it, then the understanding was set on work to commend, to advance, to conduct and to approve, to believe it, and to be factious in behalf of the new purchase. I do not believe the understanding part of man received any natural decrement or diminution. For if to the devils their naturals remain intire, it is not likely that the lesser sin of man should suffer a more violent and effective mischief. Neither can it be understood how the reasonable soul, being immortal both in itself and its essential faculties, can lose or be lessened in them, any more than it can die. But it received impediment by new propositions; it lost and willingly forgot what God had taught, and went away from the fountain of truth, and gave trust to the father of lies, and it must without remedy grow foolish; and so a man came to know evil, just as a man is said to taste of death: for, in proper speaking, as death is not to be felt, because it takes away all sense; so neither can evil be known, because whatsoever is truly cognoscible, is good and true: and therefore all the knowlege a man gets by sin is to feel evil; he knows it not by discourse, but by sense; not by proposition, but by smart; the devil doing to man as Æsculapius did to Neoclides, ὄξει διέμενος Σφηττίῳ, Κατέπλασεν

αὐτοῦ τὰ βλέφαρα, ἵνα Ὀδυνῷτο μᾶλλον. "he gave him a formidable collyrium to torment him more;" the effect of which was, ὅτι βλέπειν τὸν Πλοῦτον ταχὺ ἐποίησεν, Τὸν δὲ Νεοκλείδη μᾶλλον ἐποίησεν τυφλόν: (Arist. Pl. 720.) "the devil himself grew more quicksighted to abuse us," but we became more blind by that opening of our eyes. I shall not need to discourse of the philosophy of this mischief, and by the connexion of what causes ignorance doth follow sin: but it is certain whether a man would fain be pleased with sin, or be quiet or fearless when he hath sinned, or continue in it, or persuade others to it, he must do it by false propositions, by lyings, and such weak discourses as none can believe but such as are born fools, or such as have made themselves so, or are made so by others. Who in the world is a verier fool, a more ignorant, wretched person, than he that is an atheist? A man may better believe there is no such man as himself, and that he is not in being, than that there is no God: for himself can cease to be, and once was not, and shall be changed from what he is, and in very many periods of his life knows not that he is; and so it is every night with him when he sleeps: but none of these can happen to God; and if he knows it not, he is a fool. Can any thing in this world be more foolish than to think that all this rare fabric of heaven and earth can come by chance, when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster? To see rare effects and no cause; an excellent government and no prince; a motion without an immoveable; a circle without a centre; a time without eternity; a second without a first; a thing that begins not from itself, and therefore not to perceive there is something from whence it does begin, which must be without beginning; these things are so against philosophy and natural reason, that he must needs be a beast in his understanding that does not assent to them; this is the atheist: 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' That is his character: the thing framed says that nothing framed it; the tongue never made itself to speak, and yet talks against him that did; saying, that which is made, is, and that which made it, is not. But this folly is as infinite as hell, as much without light or bound as the chaos or the primitive nothing. But in this, the devil never prevailed very far; his schools were always thin at these lec-

tures: some few people have been witty against God, that taught them to speak before they knew to spell a syllable; but either they are monsters in their manners, or mad in their understandings, or ever find themselves confuted by a thunder or a plague, by danger or death.

But the devil hath infinitely prevailed in a thing that is almost as senseless and ignorant as atheism, and that is idolatry; not only making God after man's image, but in the likeness of a calf, of a cat, of a serpent; making men such fools as to worship a quartan ague, fire and water, onions and sheep. This is the skill man learned, and the philosophy that he is taught, by believing the devil. What wisdom can there be in any man, that calls good evil, and evil good; to say fire is cold, and the sun black; that fornication can make a man happy, or drunkenness can make him wise? And this is the state of a sinner, of every one that delights in iniquity; he cannot be pleased with it if he thinks it evil; he cannot endure it, without believing this proposition, That there is in drunkenness or lust pleasure enough, good enough, to make him amends for the intolerable pains of damnation. But then if we consider on what nonsense principles the state of an evil life relies, we must in reason be impatient, and with scorn and indignation drive away the fool; such as are—sense is to be preferred before reason, interest before religion, a lust before heaven, moments before eternity, money above God himself; that a man's felicity consists in that which a beast enjoys; that a little in present, uncertain, fallible possession, is better than the certain state of infinite glories hereafter: what child, what fool, can think things more weak and more unreasonable? And yet if men do not go on these grounds, on what account do they sin? Sin hath no wiser reasons for itself than these: *μῶρος ἔχει πυραύστου μόρον*: the same argument that a fly hath to enter into a candle, the same argument a fool hath that enters into sin; it looks prettily, but rewards the eye, as burning basins do, with intolerable circles of reflected fire. Such are the principles of a sinner's philosophy. And no wiser are his hopes; all his hopes that he hath are, that he shall have time to repent of that which he chooses greedily; that he whom he every day provokes will save him, whether he will or no;

that he can, in an instant, or in a day, make amends for all the evils of forty years; or else, that he shall be saved whether he does or no; that heaven is to be had for a sigh, or a short prayer, and yet hell shall not be consequent to the affections, and labors, and hellish services of a whole life; he goes on and cares not, he hopes without a promise, and refuses to believe all the threatenings of God; but believes he shall have a mercy for which he never had a revelation. If this be knowlege or wisdom, then there is no such thing as folly, no such disease as madness.

But then consider, that there are some sins whose very formality is a lie. Superstition could not be in the world, if men did believe God to be good and wise, free and merciful, not a tyrant, not an unreasonable exactor: no man would dare do in private, what he fears to do in public, if he did know that God sees him there, and will bring that work of darkness into light. But he is so foolish as to think, that if he sees nothing, nothing sees him; for if men did perceive God to be present, and yet do wickedly, it is worse with them than I have yet spoke of; and they believe another lie, that to be seen by man will bring more shame than to be discerned by God; or that the shame of a few men's talk is more intolerable than to be confounded before Christ, and his army of angels, and saints, and all the world. He that excuses a fault by telling a lie, believes it better to be guilty of two faults, than to be thought guilty of one; and every hypocrite thinks it not good to be holy, but to be accounted so is a fine thing; that is, that opinion is better than reality, and that there is in virtue nothing good but the fame of it. And the man that takes revenge, relies on this foolish proposition; that his evil that he hath already suffered grows less if another suffers the like; that his wound cannot smart, if by my hand he dies that gave it: ἥξει τι μέλος γοερὸν γοεραῖς, the sad accents and doleful tunes are increased by the number of mourners, but the sorrow is not lessened.

I shall not need to thrust into this account the other evils of mankind that are the events of ignorance, but introduced by sin; such as are, our being moved by what we see strongly, and weakly by what we understand; that men are moved

rather by a fable than by a syllogism, by parables than by demonstrations, by examples than by precepts, by seeming things than by real, by shadows than by substances; that men judge of things by their first events, and measure the events by their own short lives, or shorter observations; that they are credulous to believe what they wish, and incredulous of what makes against them, measuring truth or falsehood by measures that cannot fit them, as foolishly as if they should judge of a color by the dimensions of a body, or feel music with the hand; they make general conclusions from particular instances, and take account of God's actions by the measures of a man. Men call that justice that is on their side, and all their own causes are right, and they are so always; they are so when they affirm them in their youth, and they are so when they deny them in their old age; and they are confident in all their changes; and their first error, which they now see, does not make them modest in the proposition which they now maintain; for they do not understand that what was, may be so again: 'So foolish and ignorant was I (said David), and as it were a beast before thee.' Ambition is folly, and temerity is ignorance, and confidence never goes without it, and impudence is worse, and zeal or contention is madness, and prating is want of wisdom, and lust destroys it, and makes a man of a weak spirit, and a cheap reasoning; and there are in the catalogue of sins very many, which are directly kinds, and parts, and appendages of ignorance; such as are, blindness of mind, affected ignorance, and wilful; neglect of hearing the word of God, resolved incredulity, forgetfulness of holy things, lying and believing a lie; this is the fruit of sin, this is the knowlege that the devil promised to our first parents as the rewards of disobedience; and although they sinned as weakly and fondly, *φρονήματος τὸ πρὶν στερηθέντες*, on as slight grounds, and trifling a temptation, and as easy a deception, as many of us since, yet the causes of our ignorance are increased by the multiplication of our sins; and if it was so bad in the green tree, it is much worse in the dry; and no man is so very a fool as the sinner, and none are wise but the servants of God,

Μοῦνοι Χαλδαῖοι σοφίαν λάχον, ἠδ' ἄρ' Ἑβραῖοι,
Αὐτογένεθλον ἄνακτα σεβαζόμενοι Θεὸν ἁγνῶς.

"The wise Chaldees and the wiser Hebrews, which worship God chastely and purely, they only have a right to be called wise;" all that do not so are fools and ignorants, neither knowing what it is to be happy, nor how to purchase it; ignorant of the noblest end, and of the competent means towards it: they neither know God nor themselves, and no ignorance is greater than this, or more pernicious. What man is there in the world that thinks himself covetous or proud? and yet millions there are who, like Harpaste, think that the house is dark, but not themselves. Virtue makes our desires temperate and regular, it observes our actions, condemns our faults, mortifies our lusts, watches all our dangers and temptations: but sin makes our desires infinite, and we would have we cannot tell what: we strive that we may forget our faults; we labor that we may neither remember nor consider; we justify our errors, and call them innocent, and that which is our shame we miscall honor; and our whole life hath in it so many weak discourses and trifling propositions, that the whole world of sinners is like the hospital of the *insensati*, madness and folly possess the greater part of mankind. What greater madness is there than to spend the price of a whole farm in contention for three sheaves of corn? and yet *tantum pectora cæcæ Noctis habent*, this is the wisdom of such as as are contentious, and love their own will more than their happiness, their humor more than their peace.

——— Furor est post omnia perdere naulum.*

Men lose their reason, and their religion, and themselves at last, for want of understanding; and all the wit and discourses by which sin creeps in, are but *φροντίδων βουλεύματα, γλώσσης τε κόμποι*,† "frauds of the tongue, and consultations of care:" but in the whole circle of sins there is not one wise proposition, by which a man may conduct his affairs, or himself become instructed to felicity. This is the first natural fruit of sin: it makes a man a fool, and this hurt sin does to the understanding, and this is shame enough to that in which men are most apt to glory.

* Juv. viii. 97. † Hecub. 630.

2. Sin naturally makes a man weak; that is, unapt to do noble things: by which I do not understand a natural disability: for it is equally ready for a man to will good as evil, and as much in the power of his hands to be lifted up in prayer to God, as against his brother in a quarrel; and between a virtuous object and his faculties there is a more apt proportion, than between his spirit and a vice; and every act of grace does more please the mind than an act of sin does delight the sense; and every crime does greater violence to the better part of man, than mortification does to the lower; and oftentimes a duty consists in a negative, as, not to be drunk, not to swear, and it is not to be understood that a man hath naturally no power not to do; if there be a natural disability, it is to action, not to rest or ceasing: and therefore in this case we cannot reasonably nor justly accuse our nature, but we have reason to blame our manners, which have introduced on us a moral disability, that is, not that the faculty is impotent and disabled, but that the whole man is; for the will in many cases desires to do good, and the understanding is convinced and consents, and the hand can obey, and the passions can be directed, and be instrumental to God's service: but because they are not used to it, the will finds a difficulty to do them so much violence, and the understanding consents to their lower reasonings, and the desires of the lower man do will stronger; and then the whole man cannot do the duty that is expected. There is a law in the members, and he that gave that law is a tyrant, and the subjects of that law are slaves, and oftentimes their ear is bored; and they love their fetters, and desire to continue that bondage for ever; the law is the law of sin, the devil is the tyrant, custom is the sanction or the firmament of the law; and every vicious man is a slave, and chooses the vilest master, and the basest of services, and the most contemptible rewards. *Lex enim peccati est violentia consuetudinis, qua trahitur et tenetur animus etiam invitus, eo merito quo in eam volens illabitur*, said St. Austin: "The law of sin is the violence of custom, which keeps a man's mind against his mind, because he entered willingly," and gave up his own interest; which he ought to have secured for his own felicity, and for his service who gave for it an invaluable price: and indeed in questions

of virtue and vice there is no such thing as nature; or it is so inconsiderable, that it hath in it nothing beyond an inclination which may be reverted; and very often not so much: nothing but a perfect indifferency, we may if we will, or we may choose: but custom brings in a new nature, and makes a bias in every faculty. To a vicious man some sins become necessary; temperance makes him sick; severity is death to him, it destroys his cheerfulness and activity, it is as his nature, and the desire dwells for ever with him, and his reasonings are framed for it and his fancy, and in all he is helped by example, by company, by folly, and inconsideration; and all these are a faction and a confederacy against the honor and service of God. And in this, philosophy is at a stand, nothing can give an account of it but experience and sorrowful instances; for it is infinitely unreasonable, that when you have discoursed wisely against unchastity, and told, that we are separated from it by a circumvallation of laws of God and man, that it dishonors the body, and makes the spirit captive, that it is fought against by arguments sent from all the corners of reason and religion, and the man knows all this, and believes it, and prays against his sin, and hates himself for it, and curses the actions of it; yet oppose against all this but a fable or a merry story, a proverb or a silly saying, the sight of his mistress, or any thing but to lessen any one of the arguments brought against it, and that man shall as certainly and clearly be determined to that sin, as if he had on his side all the reason of the world. *Δεινὸν γὰρ ἦθος καὶ ἐξομοιῶσαι καὶ βιάσασθαι πρὸς φύσιν.** Custom does as much as nature can do; it does sometimes more, and superinduces a disposition contrary to our natural temper. Eudemus had so used his stomach to so unnatural drinks, that, as himself tells the story, he took in one day two-and-twenty potions in which hellebore was infused, and rose at noon, and supped at night, and felt no change: so are those that are corrupted with evil customs, nothing will purge them: if you discourse wittily, they hear you not; or, if they do, they have twenty ways to answer, and twice twenty to neglect it: if you persuade them to promise to leave their sin, they do but show their folly at the

* Plutarch.

next temptation, and tell you that they did not mean it: and if you take them at an advantage when their hearts are softened with a judgment or a fear, with a shame or an indignation, and then put the bars and locks of vows on them, it is all one; one vow shall hinder but one action, and the appetite shall be doubled by the restraint, and the next opportunity shall make an amends for the first omission; or else the sin shall enter by parts: the vow shall only put the understanding to make a distinction, or to change the circumstance, and under that color the crime shall be admitted, because the man is resolved to suppose the matter so dressed was not vowed against. But then, when that is done, the understanding shall open that eye that did but wink before, and see that it was the same thing, and secretly rejoice that it was so cozened: for now the lock is opened, and the vow was broken against his will, and the man is at liberty again, because he did the thing at unawares, οὐ θέλων τε καὶ θέλων, still he is willing to believe the sin was not formal vow-breach, but now he sees he broke it materially, and because the band is broken, the yoke is in pieces; therefore the next action shall go on on the same stock of a single iniquity, without being affrightened in his conscience at the noise of perjury. I wish we were all so innocent as not to understand the discourse; but it uses to be otherwise.

> Nam si discedas, laqueo tenet ambitiosi
> Consuetudo mali:—— et ægro in corde senescit.*

"Custom hath waxen old in his deceived heart, and made snares for him that he cannot disentangle himself;" so true is that saying of God by the prophet, 'Can an Ethiopian change his skin? then may ye learn to dwell, when ye are accustomed to do evil.' But I instance in two things, which, to my sense, seem great aggravations of the slavery and weakness of a customary sinner.

1. The first is, that men sin against their interest. They know they shall be ruined by it; it will undo their estates, lose their friends, ruin their fortunes, destroy their body, impoverish the spirit, load the conscience, discompose his rest, confound

* Juv. vii. 50.

his reason, amaze him in all his faculties, destroy his hopes, and mischief enough besides; and when he considers this, he declares against it; but *cum bona verba erumpunt, affectus tamen ad consuetudinem relabuntur*, "the man gives good words, but the evil custom prevails;" and it happens as in the case of the Tirynthians, who, to free their nation from a great plague, were bidden only to abstain from laughter while they offered their sacrifice: but they had been so used to a ridiculous effeminacy, and vain course of conversation, that they could not, though the honor and splendor of the nation did depend on it. God of his mercy keep all Christian people from a custom in sinning! for if they be once fallen thither, nothing can recover them but a miraculous grace.

2. The second aggravation of it is, that custom prevails against experience. Though the man hath already smarted, though he hath been disgraced and undone, though he lost his relation and friends, he is turned out of service, and disemployed, he begs with a load of his old sins on his shoulders; yet this will not cure an evil custom: do we not daily see how miserable some men make themselves with drunkenness and folly? Have not we seen them that have been sick with intemperance, deadly sick, enduring for one drunken meeting more pain than is in all the fasting-days of the whole year? and yet, do they not the very next day go to it again? Indeed, some few are smitten into the beginning of repentance, and they stay a fortnight, or a month, and, it may be, resist two or three invitations; but yet the custom is not gone,

> Nec tu, cum obstiteris semel, instantique negaris
> Parere imperio, 'Rupi jam vincula,' dicas:

"Think not the chain is off, when thou hast once or twice resisted;" or if the chain be broke, part remains on thee, like a cord on a dog's neck.

> Nam et luctata canis nodum abripit; attamen illi,
> Cum fugit, a collo trahitur pars longa catenæ.*

He is not free that draws his chain after him; and he that

* Pers. v. 157.

breaks off from his sins with greatest passion, stands in need of prosperous circumstances, and a strange freedom from temptation, and accidental hardness, and superinduced confidence, and a preternatural severity; *Opus est aliqua fortunæ indulgentia adhuc inter humana luctanti, dum nodum illum exsolvit et omne vinculum mortale,** for the knot can hardly be untied which a course of evil manners hath bound on the soul; and every contingency in the world can entangle him that wears on his neck the links of a broken chain. *Nam qui ab eo quod amat, quam extemplo suaviis sagittatis percussus est, ilico res foras labitur, liquitur:* if he sees his temptation again, he is ἐπιλώμενος ὑπ' εὐνοίας: his kindness to it, and conversation with his lust, undoes him, and breaks his purposes, and then he dies again, or falls on that stone, that with so much pains he removed a little out of his way; and he would lose the spent wealth, or the health, and the reputation over again, if it were in his power. Philomusus was a wild young fellow in Domitian's time, and he was hard put to it to make a large pension to maintain his lust and luxury, and he was every month put to beggarly arts to feed his crime. But when his father died and left him all, he disinherited himself; he spent it all, though he knew he was to suffer that trouble always, which vexed his lustful soul in the frequent periods of his violent want.†

Now, this is such a state of slavery, that persons that are sensible ought to complain, δουλείαν δουλεύειν πάνυ ἰσχυράν· that they serve worse lords than Egyptian task-masters; there is a lord within that rules and rages, *intus et in jecore ægro pascuntur domini;* sin dwells there, and makes a man a miserable servant: and this is not only a metaphorical expression, under which some spiritual and metaphysical truth is represented, but it is a physical, material truth; and a man endures hardship, he cannot move but at this command; and not his outward actions only, but his will and his understanding too, are kept in fetters and foolish bondage: μέμνησο, ὅτι νευροσπαστοῦν ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνο, τὸ ἔνδον ἐγκεκρυμμένον· ἐκεῖνο ῥητορεία, ἐκεῖνο ζωή, ἐκεῖνο ἄνθρωπος, said Marcus Antoninus (11. 38.); "The two parts of a man are rent in sunder, and that that prevails, is the life, it is

* Seneca de vita beata. † Martial, lib. iii. 10.

the man, it is the eloquence, persuading every thing to its own interest." And now consider what is the effect of this evil. A man by sin is made a slave, he loses that liberty that is dearer to him than life itself; and, like the dog in the fable, we suffer chains and ropes only for a piece of bread, when the lion thought liberty a sufficient reward and price for hunger, and all the hardnesses of the wilderness. Do not all the world fight for liberty, and at no terms will lay down arms, till at least they be cozened with the image and color of it? *οὐ θνήσκει ζῆλος ἐλευθερίας*: and yet for the pleasure of a few minutes we give ourselves into bondage; and all the world does it, more or less.

Φεῦ, οὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν, ὅστις ἔστ' ἐλεύθερος.
Ἢ χρημάτων γὰρ δοῦλός ἐστιν, ἢ τύχης,
Ἢ πλῆθος αὐτὸν πόλεως, ἢ νόμων γραφαὶ
*Εἴργουσι χρῆσθαι μὴ κατὰ γνώμην τρόποις.**

Either men are slaves to fortune, or to lust; to covetousness, or tyranny; something or other compels him to usages against his will and reason; and when the laws cannot rule him, money can; *Divitiæ enim apud sapientem virum in servitute sunt, apud stultum in imperio;* for "Money is the wise man's servant, and the fool's master;" but the bondage of a vicious person, is such a bondage as the child hath in the womb, or rather as a sick man in his bed; we are bound fast by our disease, and a consequent weakness; we cannot go forth though the doors be open, and the fetters knocked off, and virtue and reason, like St. Peter's angel, call us, and beat us on the sides, and offer to go before us, yet we cannot come forth from prison; for we have by our evil customs given hostages to the devil, never to stir from the enemy's quarter; and this is the greatest bondage that is imaginable, the bondage of conquered, wounded, unresisting people: *ἀδέσποτος ἡ ἀρετή*, "virtue only is the truest liberty:" 'and if the Son of God make us free, then are we free indeed.'

3. Sin does naturally introduce a great baseness on the spirit expressed in Scripture, in some cases, by the devil's entering into a man, as it was in the case of Judas, 'after he had taken

* Euripid. Hecuba, Porson, 858.

the sop, Satan entered into him;* and St. Cyprian, speaking of them that after baptism lapsed into foul crimes, affirms, that *spiritu immundo quasi redeunte quatiuntur, ut manifestum sit diabolum in baptismo fide credentis excludi, si fides postmodum defecerit, regredi;*† "faith, and the grace of baptism, turn the devil out of possession; but when faith fails, and we loose the bands of religion, then the devil returns;" that is, the man is devolved into such sins, of which there can be no reason given, which no excuse can lessen, which are set off with no pleasure, advanced by no temptations, which deceive by no allurements and flattering pretences; such things which have a proper and direct contrariety to the good spirit, and such as are not restrained by human laws; because they are states of evil rather than evil actions, principles of mischief rather than direct emanations; such as are unthankfulness, impiety, giving a secret blow, fawning hypocrisy, detraction, impudence, forgetfulness of the dead, and forgetting to do that in their absence which we promised to them in presence:

> Οὐκοῦν τόδ' αἰσχρὸν, εἰ βλέποντι μὲν φίλῳ
> Χρώμεσθ', ἐπεὶ δ' ὅλωλε, μὴ χρώμεσθ' ἔτι;‡

concerning which sorts of unworthiness, it is certain they argue a most degenerate spirit, and they are the effect, the natural effect, of malice and despair, an unwholesome ill-natured soul, a soul corrupted in its whole constitution. I remember that in the apologues of Phædrus, it is told concerning an ill-natured fellow, that he refused to pay his symbol, which himself and all the company had agreed should be given for every disease that each man had; he denying his itch to be a disease; but the company taking off the refuser's hat for a pledge, found that he had a scald head, and so demanded the money double; which he pertinaciously resisting, they threw him down, and then discovered he was broken-bellied, and justly condemned him to pay three philippics:

> ——— Quæ fuerat fabula, pœna fuit.

One disease discovers itself by the hiding of another, and that

* John xiii. 27. † Cypr. Ep. 76.
‡ Euripid. Hecub. Porson, 315.

being opened discovers a third: he that is almost taken in a fault, tells a lie to escape; and to protect that lie, he forswears himself; and that he may not be suspected of perjury, he grows impudent; and that sin may not shame him, he will glory in it, like the slave in the comedy, who, being torn with whips, grinned and forced an ugly smile that it might not seem to smart. There are some sins which a man that is newly fallen, cannot entertain. There is no crime made ready for a young sinner, but that which nature prompts him to. Natural inclination is the first tempter, then compliance, then custom, but this being helped by a consequent folly, dismantles the soul, making it to hate God, to despise religion, to laugh at severity, to deride sober counsels, to flee from repentance, to resolve against it, to delight in sin without abatement of spirit or purposes: for it is an intolerable thing for a man to be tormented in his conscience for every sin he acts; that must not be; he must have his sin and his peace too, or else he can have neither long; and because true peace cannot come, for 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,' therefore they must make a fantastic peace by a studied cozening of themselves, by false propositions, by carelessness, by stupidity, by impudence, by sufferance and habit, by conversation and daily acquaintances, by doing some things, as Absalom did when he lay with his father's concubines, to make it impossible for him to repent or to be forgiven, something to secure him in the possession of hell; *Tute hoc intristi, quod tibi exedendum est*, the man must through it now: and this is it that makes men fall into all baseness of spiritual sins, [*Ἀσεβὴς ἐλθὼν εἰς βάθος κακῶν καταφρονεῖ*, "When a man is come to the bottom of his wickedness, he despises all"] such as malice and despite, rancor and impudence, malicious, studied ignorance, voluntary contempt of all religion, hating of good men and good counsels, and taking every wise man and wise action to be his enemy; *οὐδὲν οὕτως ἀναίσχυντον ποιεῖ ὡς πονηρὸν συνειδός*. And this is that baseness of sin which Plato so much detested, that he said, "he should blush to be guilty of, though he knew God would pardon him, and that men should never know it, *propter solam peccati turpitudinem*, for the very baseness that is in it." A man that is false to his God, will also, if any evil temptation

overtakes him, betray his friend; and it is notorious in the covetous and ambitious:

> Ἀχάριστον ὑμῶν σπέρμ', ὅσοι δημηγόρους
> Ζηλοῦτε τιμάς· μηδὲ γιγνώσκοισθ' ἐμοὶ,
> Οἳ τοὺς φίλους βλάπτοντες οὐ φροντίζετε,
> Ἢν τοῖσι πολλοῖς πρὸς χάριν λέγητέ τι.*

They are an unthankful generation, and, to please the people, or to serve their interest, will hurt their friends. That man hath so lost himself to all sweetness and excellency of spirit, that is gone thus far in sin, that he looks like a condemned man, or is like the accursed spirits, preserved in chains of darkness and impieties unto the judgment of the great day, ἄνθρωπος δ' ἀεὶ ὁ μὲν πονηρὸς οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν κακός· "this man can be nothing but evil;" for these inclinations and evil frowardnesses, this dyscrasy and gangrened disposition, do always suppose a long or a base sin for their parent: and the product of these is a wretchless spirit; that is, an aptness to any unworthiness, and an unwillingness to resist any temptation, a perseverance in baseness, and a consignation to all damnation: Δράσαντι δ' αἰσχρὰ δεινά τ' ἀποτίμια Δαίμων δέδωκεν, "If men do evil things, evil things shall be their reward." If they obey the evil spirit, an evil spirit shall be their portion; and the devil shall enter into them as he entered into Judas, and fill them full of iniquity.

SERMON VIII.

PART III.

ALTHOUGH these are shameful effects of sin, and a man need no greater dishonor than to be a fool and a slave, and a base person, all which sin infallibly makes him; yet there are

* Eur. Hecub. Porson, 258.

some sins, which are directly shameful in their nature, and proper disreputation; and a very great many sins are the worst and basest in several respects; that is, every of them hath a venomous quality of its own, whereby it is marked and appropriated to a peculiar evil spirit. The devil's sin was the worst, because it came from the greatest malice: Adam's was the worst, because it was of most universal efficacy and dissemination: Judas's sin the worst, because against the most excellent person; and the relapses of the godly are the worst, by reason they were the most obliged persons. But the ignorance of the law is the greatest of evils, if we consider its danger; but covetousness is worse than that, if we regard its incurable and growing nature; luxury is most alien from spiritual things, and is the worst of all in its temptation and our proneness; but pride grows most venomous by its unreasonableness and importunity, arising even from the good things a man hath; even from graces, and endearments, and from being more in debt to God. Sins of malice, and against the Holy Ghost, oppugn the greatest grace with the greatest spite: but idolatry is perfectly hated by God by a direct enmity. Some sins are therefore most heinous, because to resist them is most easy, and to act them there is the least temptation: such as are, severally, lying and swearing. There is a strange poison in the nature of sins, that, of so many sorts, every one of them should be the worst. Every sin hath an evil spirit, a devil of its own, to manage, to conduct, and to imbitter it: and although all these are God's enemies, and have an appendant shame in their retinue, yet to some sins shame is more appropriate, and a proper ingredient in their constitutions: such as are lying, and lust, and vow-breach, and inconstancy. God sometimes cures the pride of a man's spirit by suffering his evil manners, and filthy inclination, to be determined on lust: lust makes a man afraid of public eyes, and common voices; it is (as all sins else are, but this especially) a work of darkness; it does debauch the spirit, and make it to decay and fall off from courage and resolution, constancy and severity, the spirit of government and a noble freedom; and those punishments which the nations of the world have inflicted on it, are not smart so much as shame: lustful souls are cheap and easy, trifling and despised, in all

wise accounts; they are so far from being fit to sit with princes, that they dare not chastise a sinning servant that is private to their secret follies: it is strange to consider what laborious arts of concealment, what excuses and lessenings, what pretences and fig-leaves, men will put before their nakedness and crimes: shame was the first thing that entered on the sin of Adam; and when the second world began, there was a strange scene of shame acted by Noah and his sons, and it ended in slavery and baseness to all descending generations.

We see the event of this by too sad an experience. What arguments, what hardness, what preaching, what necessity, can persuade men to confess their sins? They are so ashamed of them, that to be concealed they prefer before their remedy: and yet in penitential confession the shame is going off; it is like Cato's coming out of the theatre, or the philosopher from the tavern; it might have been shame to have entered, but glory to have departed for ever; and yet ever to have relation to sin is so shameful a thing, that a man's spirit is amazed, and his face is confounded, when he is dressed of so shameful a disease. And there are but few men that will endure it, but rather choose to involve it in excuses and denial, in the clouds of lying, and the white linen of hypocrisy: and yet, when they make a veil for their shame, such is the fate of sin, the shame grows the bigger and the thicker; we lie to men, and we excuse it to God; either some parts of lying, or many parts of impudence, darkness, or forgetfulness, running away or running farther in, these are the covers of our shame, like menstruous rags on a skin of leprosy: but so sometimes we see a decayed beauty besmeared with a lying fucus, and the chinks filled with ceruse; besides that it makes no real beauty, it spoils the face, and betrays evil manners: it does not hide old age, or the change of years, but it discovers pride or lust: it was not shame to be old, or wearied and worn out with age, but it is a shame to dissemble nature by a wanton vizor. So sin retires from blushing into shame: if it be discovered, it is not to be endured; and if we go to hide it, we make it worse. But then if we remember how ambitious we are for fame and reputation, for honor and a fair opinion, for a good name all our days, and when our days are done; and that no ingenuous man can enjoy

any thing he hath, if he lives in disgrace; and that nothing so breaks a man's spirit as dishonor, and the meanest person alive does not think himself fit to be despised; we are to consider into what an evil condition sin puts us, for which we are not only disgraced and disparaged here, marked with disgraceful punishments, despised by good men, our follies derided, our company avoided, and hooted at by boys, talked of in fairs and markets, pointed at and described by appellatives of scorn, and every body can chide us, and we die unpitied, and lie in our graves eaten up by worms and a foul dishonor; but after all this, at the day of judgment, we shall be called from our charnel-houses, where our disgrace could not sleep, and shall, in the face of God, in the presence of angels and devils, before all good men and all the evil, see and feel the shame of all our sins written on our foreheads: here in this state of misery and folly we make nothing of it; and though we dread to be discovered to men, yet to God we confess our sins without a trouble or a blush; but tell an even story, because we find some forms of confession prescribed in our prayer-books; and, that it may appear how indifferent and unconcerned we seem to be, we read and say all, and confess the sins we never did, with as much sorrow and regret as those that we have acted a thousand times. But in that strange day of recompenses, we shall find the devil to upbraid the criminal, Christ to disown them, the angels to drive them from the seat of mercy, and shame to be their smart, the consigning them to damnation; they shall then find that they cannot dwell where virtue is rewarded, and where honor and glory have a throne; there is no veil but what is rent, no excuse to any but to them that are declared as innocent: no circumstances concerning the wicked to be considered but them that aggravate; then the disgrace is not confined to the talk of a village, or a province, but is scattered to all the world: not only in one age shall the shame abide, but the men of all generations shall see and wonder at the vastness of that evil that is spread on the souls of sinners for ever and ever; ἀγὼν μέγας, Πλήρης στεναγμῶν, οὐδὲ δακρύων κενός. (Hec. 234.) No night shall then hide it: for in those regions of darkness where the dishonored man shall dwell for ever, there is nothing visible but the shame; there is light enough for that, but dark-

ness for all things else: and then he shall reap the full harvest of his shame; all that for which wise men scorned him, and all that for which God hated him; all that in which he was a fool, and all that in which he was malicious; that which was public, and that which was private; that which fools applauded, and that which himself durst not own; the secrets of his lust, and the criminal contrivances of his thoughts; the base and odious circumstances, and the frequency of the action, and the partner of his sin; all that which troubles his conscience, and all that he willingly forgets,—shall be proclaimed by the trumpet of God, by the voice of an archangel, in the great congregation of spirits and just men.

III. There is one great circumstance more of the shame of sin, which extremely enlarges the evil of a sinful state, but that is not consequent to sin by a natural emanation, but is superinduced by the just wrath of God: and therefore is to be considered in the third part, which is next to be handled.

When the Bœotians asked the oracle, by what they should become happy; the answer was made, Ἀσεβήσαντας εὐπράξειν· "Wicked and irreligious persons are prosperous:" and they taking the devil at his word, threw the inspired Pythian, the ministering witch, into the sea, hoping so to become mighty in peace and war. The effect of which was this, the devil was found a liar, and they fools at first, and at last felt the reward of irreligion. For there are to some crimes such events, which are not to be expected from the connexion of natural causes, but from secret influences and undiscernible conveyances; that a man should be made sick for receiving the holy sacrament unworthily, and blind for resisting the words of an Apostle, a preacher of the laws of Jesus, and die suddenly for breaking of his vow, and committing sacrilege, and be under the power and scourge of an exterminating angel for climbing his father's bed —these are things beyond the world's philosophy; but as in nature, so in divinity too, there are sympathies and antipathies, effects which we feel by experience, and are forewarned of by revelation, which no natural reason can judge, nor any providence can prevent, but by living innocently, and complying with the commandments of God. The rod of God, which

'cometh not into the lot of the righteous,' strikes the sinning man with sore strokes of vengeance.

1. The first that I shall note is, that which I called the aggravation of the shame of sin; and that is, an impossibility of being concealed in most cases of heinous crimes, Μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν ποιήσας ἔλπιζε λήσειν, "Let no man suppose that he shall for ever hide his sin:" a single action may be conveyed away under the covert of an excuse or a privacy, escaping as Ulysses did the search of Polyphemus, and it shall in time be known that it did escape, and shall be discovered that it was private; that is, that it is so no longer. But no wicked man that dwelt and delighted in sin, did ever go off from his scene of unworthiness without a filthy character: the black veil is thrown over him before his death, and by some contingency or other he enters into his cloud, because few sins determine finally in the thoughts; but if they dwell there, they will also enter into action, and then the sin discovers itself; or else the injured person will proclaim it, or the jealous man will talk of it before it is done, or curious people will inquire and discover, or the spirit of detraction shall be let loose on him, and in spite shall declare more than he knows, not more than is true. The ancients, especially the scholars of Epicurus, believed that no man could be secured or quiet in his spirit from being discovered, *Scelus aliqua tutum, nulla securum tulit;* "they are not secure, even when they are safe;" but are afflicted with perpetual jealousies; and every whisper is concerning them, and all new noises are arrests to their spirits; and the day is too light, and the night is too horrid, and both are the most opportune for their discovery; and besides the undiscernible connexion of the contingencies of Providence, many secret crimes have been published by dreams, and talkings in their sleep. It is the observation of Lucretius,

> Multi de magnis per somnum rebu' loquuntur,
> Indicioque sui facti persæpe fuere.*

And what their understanding kept a guard on, their fancy let

* Lucr. iv. 1016.

loose; fear was the bars and locks, but sleep became the key to open, even then when all the senses were shut, and God ruled alone without the choice and discourse of man. And though no man regards the wilder talkings of a distracted man, yet it hath sometimes happened, that a delirium and a fever, fear of death, and the intolerable apprehensions of damnation, have opened the cabinet of sin, and brought to light all that was acted in the curtains of night;

> Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes,
> Aut morbo delirantes, protraxe ferantur,
> Et, celata diu, in medium peccata dedisse.*

But there are so many ways of discovery, and amongst so many, some one does so certainly happen, that they are well summed up by Sophocles,† by saying, that "Time hears all, and tells all;"

> Πρὸς ταῦτα κρύπτε μηδὲν, ὡς ὁ πάντ' ὁρῶν
> Καὶ πάντ' ἀκούων, πάντ' ἀναπτύσσει χρόνος.

A cloud may be its roof and cover till it passes over; but when it is driven by a fierce wind, or runs fondly after the sun, it lays open a deformity, which like an ulcer had a skin over it, and pain within, and drew to it a heap of sorrows big enough to run over all its inclosures. Many persons have betrayed themselves by their own fears, and knowing themselves never to be secure enough, have gone to purge themselves of what nobody suspected them; offered an apology when they had no accuser, but one within; which, like a thorn in the flesh, or like 'a word in a fool's heart,' was uneasy till it came out. *Non amo se nimium purgitantes:* when men are "over-busy in justifying themselves," it is a sign themselves think they need it. Plutarch tells of a young gentleman that destroyed a swallow's nest, pretending to them that reproved him for doing the thing, which in their superstition the Greeks esteemed so ominous, that the little bird accused him for killing his father. And to this purpose it was that Solomon gave counsel: 'Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought, nor the rich in thy bedchamber;

* Lucr. v. 1157. † Ἱππ. frag.

for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that that hath wings, shall tell the matter:'* murder and treason have by such strange ways been revealed, as if God had appointed an angel president of the revelation, and had kept this in secret and sure ministry to be as an argument to destroy atheism from the face of the earth, by opening the secrets of men with this key of providence. Intercepting of letters, mistaking names, false inscriptions, errors of messengers, faction of the parties, fear in the actors, horror in the action, the majesty of the person, the restlessness of the mind, distracted looks, weariness of the spirit, and all under the conduct of the divine wisdom and the divine vengeance, make the covers of the most secret sin transparent as a net, and visible as the Chian wines in the purest crystal.

For besides that God takes care of kings, and of the lives of men,—

> Ἡ δὲ τόσον μὲν ἔεργεν ἀπὸ χροὸς, ὡς ὅτε μήτηρ
> Παιδὸς ἐέργει μυῖαν, ὅθ' ἡδεῖ λέξατο ὕπνῳ,†

driving away evil from their persons, and "watching as a mother to keep gnats and flies from her dear boy sleeping in the cradle;" there are, in the machinations of a mighty mischief, so many motions to be concentred, so many wheels to move regularly, and the hand that turns them does so tremble, and there is so universal a confusion in the conduct, that unless it passes suddenly into act, it will be prevented by discovery; and if it be acted, it enters into such a mighty horror, that the face of a man will tell what his heart did think, and his hands have done. And, after all, it was seen and observed by him that stood behind the cloud, who shall also bring every work of darkness into light in the day of strange discoveries and fearful recompenses: and in the mean time certain it is, that no man can long put on a person and act a part, but his evil manner will peep through the corners of the white robe, and God will bring a hypocrite to shame even in the eyes of men.

2. A second superinduced consequent of sin brought on it by the wrath of God, is sin: when God punishes sin with sin he is extremely angry; for then the punishment is not medicinal, but

* Eccles. x. 20. † Homer. Il. Δ. 130.

final and exterminating; God in that case takes no care concerning him, though he dies, and dies eternally. I do not here speak of those sins which are naturally consequent to each other, as evil words to evil thoughts, evil actions to evil words, rage to drunkenness, lust to gluttony, pride to ambition; but such which God suffers the man's evil nature to be tempted to by evil opportunities: Θεῶν ἀναγκαῖον τόδε, 'This is the wrath of God,' and the man is without remedy. It was a sad calamity, when God punished David's adultery by permitting him to fall to murder,—and Solomon's wanton and inordinate love with the crime of idolatry,—and Ananias's sacrilege with lying against the Holy Ghost,—and Judas's covetousness with betraying his Lord, and that betraying with despair, and that despair with self-murder.

——— παρακαλεῖ δ' ἐκεῖθεν αὖ
Λύπη τις ἄλλη, διάδοχος κακῶν κακοῖς.*

"One evil invites another;" and when God is angry and withdraws his grace, and the Holy Spirit is grieved and departs from his dwelling, the man is left at the mercy of the merciless enemy, and he shall receive him only with variety of mischiefs; like Hercules when he had broken the horn of Achelous, he was almost drowned with the flood that sprung from it; and the evil man, when he hath passed the first scene of his sorrows, shall be enticed or left to fall into another. For it is a certain truth, that he who resists, or that neglects to use, God's grace, shall fall into that evil condition, that when he wants it most, he shall have least. It is so with every man; he that hath the greatest want of the grace of God, shall want it more, if this great want proceeded once from his own sin. *Habenti dabitur*, said our blessed Lord, 'To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; from him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath.' It is a remarkable saying of David's; 'I have thought on thy name, O Lord, in the night-season, and have kept thy law; this I had because I kept thy commandments;'† keeping God's commandments was rewarded with keeping God's commandments. And in

* Eur. Hecub. Porson, 591. † Psal. cxix. 55, 56.

this world God hath not a greater reward to give; for so the soul is nourished unto life, so it grows up with the increase of God, so it passes on to a perfect man in Christ, so it is consigned for heaven, and so it enters into glory; for glory is the perfection of grace; and when our love to God is come to its state and perfection, then we are within the circles of a diadem, and then we are within the regions of felicity. And there is the same reason in the contrary instance.

The wicked person falls into sin, and this he had, because he sinned against his Maker. *Tradidit Deus eos in desideria cordis eorum:* and it concerns all to observe it; and if ever we find that a sin succeeds a sin in the same instance, it is because we refuse to repent; but if a sin succeeds a sin in another instance, as, if lust follows pride, or murder drunkenness; it is a sign that God will not give us the grace of repentance: he is angry at us with a destructive fury, he hath dipped his arrows in the venom of the serpent, and whets his sword in the forges of hell; then it is time that a man withdraw his foot, and that he start back from the preparations of an intolerable ruin: for though men in this case grow insensible, and that is part of the disease, διὰ τοῦτο μέγα ἐστὶ κακὸν, ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶναι δοκεῖ, saith Chrysostom; "it is the biggest part of the evil that the man feels it not;" yet the very *antiperistasis*, or the contrariety, the very horror and bigness of the danger, may possibly make a man to contend to leap out of the fire; and sometimes God works a miracle, and besides his own rule delights to reform a dissolute person, to force a man from the grave, to draw him against the bent of his evil habits; yet it is so seldom, that we are left to consider, that such persons are in a desperate condition, who cannot be saved unless God is pleased to work a miracle.

3. Sin brings in its retinue fearful plagues and evil angels, messengers of the displeasure of God, concerning which, τῶν τεθνηκότων ἅλις (Hec. 282.), "there are enough of dead;" I mean, the experience is so great, and the notion so common, and the examples so frequent, and the instances so sad, that there is scarce any thing new in this particular to be noted; but something is remarkable, and that is this,—that God, even when he forgives the sin, does reserve such ὑστερήματα τῆς θλί-

θεοῦ, "remains of punishment," and those not only to the less perfect, but to the best persons, that it makes demonstration, that every sinner is in a worse condition than he dreams of. For consider; can it be imagined that any one of us should escape better than David did? We have reason to tremble when we remember what he suffered, even when God had sealed his pardon. Did not God punish Zedekiah with suffering his eyes to be put out in the house of bondage? Was not God so angry with Valentinian, that he gave him into his enemy's hand to be flayed alive? Have not many persons been struck suddenly in the very act of sin, and some been seized on by the devil and carried away alive? These are fearful contingencies: but God hath been more angry yet; rebellion was punished in Korah and his company, by the gaping of the earth, and the men were buried alive; and Dathan and Abiram were consumed with fire for usurping the priest's office: but God hath struck severely since that time; and for the prostitution of a lady by the Spanish king, the Moors were brought in on his kingdom, and ruled there for seven hundred years. And have none of us known an excellent and good man to have descended, or rather to have been thrust, into a sin, for which he hath repented, which he hath confessed, which he hath rescinded, and which he hath made amends for as he could; and yet God was so severely angry, that this man was suffered to fall in so big a calamity, that he died by the hands of violence, in a manner so seemingly impossible to his condition, that it looked like the biggest sorrow that hath happened to the sons of men? But then, let us consider, how many and how great crimes we have done; and tremble to think, that God hath exacted so fearful pains and mighty punishments for one such sin, which we, it may be, have committed frequently. Our sin deserves as bad as theirs: and God is impartial, and we have no privilege, no promise of exemption, no reason to hope it; what then do we think shall become of this affair? Where must we suffer this vengeance? For that it is due, that it is just we suffer it, these sad examples are a perfect demonstration. We have done that, for which God thought flaying alive not to be too big a punishment: that for which

God hath smitten kings with formidable plagues; that for which governments have been changed, and nations enslaved, and churches destroyed, and the candlestick removed, and famines and pestilences have been sent on a whole kingdom; and what shall become of us? Why do we vainly hope it shall not be so with us? If it was just for these men to suffer what they did, then we are at least to expect so much; and then, let us consider, into what a fearful condition sin hath put us, on whom a sentence is read, that we shall be plagued like Zedekiah, or Korah, or Dathan, or the king of Spain, or any other king, who were, for aught we know, infinitely more innocent and more excellent persons than any of us. What will become of us? For God is as just to us as to them; and Christ died for them as well as for us; and they have repented more than we have done; and what mercy can we expect, that they might not hope for, on at least as good ground as we? God's ways are secret, and his mercies and justice dwell in a great abyss; but we are to measure our expectations by revelation and experience. But then what would become of us, if God should be as angry at our sin as at Zedekiah's, or king David's? Where have we in our body room enough for so many stripes, as our sin ought justly to be punished withal; or what security or probability have we that he will not so punish us?

For I did not represent this sad story, as a matter of possibility only, that we may fear such fearful strokes as we see God lay on sinners; but we ought to look on it as a thing that will come some way or other, and, for aught we know, we cannot escape it. So much, and more, is due for the sin; and though Christ hath redeemed our souls, and if we repent we shall not die eternally, yet he hath no where promised we shall not be smitten. It was an odd saying of the devil to a sinner whom he would fain have had to despair; *Me e cœlo ad barathrum demisit peccatum, et vos ullum in terra locum tutum existimabitis?* "Sin thrust me from heaven to hell, and do you think on earth to have security?" Men use to presume that they shall go unpunished; but we see what little reason we have to flatter and undo ourselves, *πᾶσι γὰρ κοινὸν τόδε, τὸν*

μὲν κακὸν κακόν τι πάσχειν, "He that hath sinned must look for a judgment," and how great that is, we are to take our measures by those sad instances of vengeance by which God hath chastised the best of men, when they have committed but a single sin: ὀλέθριον, ὀλέθριον κακὸν, "sin is" damnable and "destructive:" and therefore, as the ass refused the barley which the fatted swine left, perceiving by it he was fatted for the slaughter,

> Tuum libenter prorsus appeterem cibum,
> Nisi, qui nutritus illo est, jugulatus foret,*

we may learn to avoid these vain pleasures which cut the throat after they are swallowed, and leave us in that condition that we may every day fear, lest that evil happen unto us, which we see fall on the great examples of God's anger; and our fears cannot, ought not, at all to be taken off, but by an effective, busy, pungent, hasty, and a permanent repentance; and then also but in some proportions, for we cannot be secured from temporal plagues, if we have sinned; no repentance can secure us from all that; nay, God's pardon, or remitting his final anger, and forgiving the pains of hell, does not secure us here: ἡ νέμεσις παρὰ πόδας βαίνει, but sin lies at the door ready to enter in, and rifle all our fortunes.

1. But this hath two appendages, which are very considerable; and the first is, that there are some mischiefs which are the proper and appointed scourges of certain sins; and a man need not ask, *Cujus vulturis hoc erit cadaver?* (Mart. vi. 62.) "what vulture," what death, what affliction, "shall destroy this sinner?" The sin hath a punishment of his own, which usually attends it, as giddiness does a drunkard. He that commits sacrilege, is marked for a vertiginous and changeable fortune; 'Make them, O my God, like unto a wheel,'† of an inconstant state: and we and our fathers have seen it, in the change of so many families, which have been undone by being made rich: they took the lands from the church, and the curse went along with it, and the misery and the

* Phædrus, v. 4. † Psal. lxxxiii.

affliction lasted longer than the sin. Telling lies frequently hath for its punishment to be 'given over to believe a lie,' and, at last, that nobody shall believe it but himself; and then the mischief is full, he becomes a dishonored and a baffled person. The consequent of lust is properly shame; and witchcraft is still punished with baseness and beggary; and oppression of widows hath a sting; for the tears of the oppressed are, to the oppressor, like the waters of jealousy, making the belly to swell, and the thigh to rot; the oppressor seldom dies in a tolerable condition; but is remarked towards his end with some horrible affliction. The sting of oppression is darted as a man goes to his grave. In these, and the like, God keeps a rule of striking, *in quo quis peccat, in eo punitur*. The divine judgment did point at the sin, lest that be concealed by excuses, and protected by affection, and increased by passion, and destroy the man by its abode. For some sins are so agreeable to the spirit of a fool and an abused person, because he hath framed his affections to them and they comply with his unworthy interest, that when God, out of an angry kindness, smites the man and punishes the sin, the man does carefully defend his beloved sin, as the serpent does his head, which he would most tenderly preserve. But therefore God, that knows all our tricks and devices, our stratagems to be undone, hath therefore apportioned out his punishments by analogies, by proportions, and entail: so that when every sin enters into its proper portion, we may discern why God is angry, and labor to appease him speedily.

2. The second appendage to this consideration is this, that there are some states of sin which expose a man to all mischief, as it can happen, by taking off from him all his guards and defences; by driving the good spirit from him; by stripping him of the guards of angels. But this is the effect of an habitual sin, a course of an evil life, and it is called in Scripture, 'a grieving the good Spirit of God.' But the guard of angels is, in Scripture, only promised to them that live godly; 'the angels of the Lord pitch their tents round about them that fear him, and deliver them,'* said David.

* Psal. xxxiv. 7.

Τῷ δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παρεστᾶσιν πολύμοχθοι
Ἄγγελοι, οἷσι μέμηλε βροτοῖς ὃς πάντα τελεῖται.

And the Hellenists used to call the angels ἐγρηγόρους, "watchmen;" which custody is at first designed and appointed for all, when by baptism they give up their names to Christ, and enter into the covenant of religion. And of this the heathen have been taught something by conversation with the Hebrews and Christians. *Unicuique nostrum dare pædagogum Deum*, said Seneca to Lucilius, *non primarium, sed ex eorum numero, quos Ovidius vocat ex plebe Deos:* "There is a guardian god assigned to every one of us, of the number of those which are of the second order;" such are those of whom David speaks, 'Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee:' and it was the doctrine of the Stoics, that to every one there was assigned a genius, and a Juno: *Quamobrem major cœlitum populus etiam quam hominum intelligi potest, quum singuli ex semetipsis totidem Deos faciant, Junones geniosque adoptando sibi*, said Pliny: "Every one does adopt gods into his family, and get a genius and a Juno of their own." *Junonem meam iratam habeam;* it was the oath of Quartilla in Petronius (25. 4.); and Socrates in Plato is said to "swear by his Juno;" though afterward, among the Romans, it became the woman's oath, and a note of effeminacy; but the thing they aimed at was this, that God took care of us below, and sent a ministering spirit for our defence; but that this is only on the accounts of piety, they knew not. But we are taught it by the Spirit of God in Scripture. For, 'the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the good of them who shall be heirs of salvation;'* and concerning St. Peter, the faithful had an opinion, that it might be "his angel;" agreeing to the doctrine of our blessed Lord, who spake of angels appropriate to his little ones, to infants, to those that belong to him. Now what God said to the sons of Israel, is also true to us Christians; 'Behold, I send an angel before thee; beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions.'† So that if we provoke the Spirit of the Lord to anger by a course of

* Heb. i. 14. † Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

evil living, either the angel will depart from us, or, if he stays, he will strike us. The best of these is bad enough, and he is highly miserable

——— qui non sit tanto hoc custode securus,

whom an angel cannot defend from mischief, nor any thing secure him from the wrath of God. It was the description and character which the Erythrean sibyl gave to God,

Ἄφθαρτος, κτιστὴς αἰώνιος, αἰθέρα ναίων,
Τοῖς τ' δικάιοις ἄκακον προφέρων πολὺ μείζονα μισθὸν,
Τοῖς δὲ κακοῖς ἀδίκοις τε χόλον καὶ θυμὸν ἐγείρων.

It is God's appellative to be "a giver of excellent rewards to just and innocent persons; but to assign to evil men fury, wrath, and sorrow, for their portion." If I should launch farther into this dead sea, I should find nothing but horrid shriekings, and the skulls of dead men utterly undone. Fearful it is to consider, that sin does not only drive us into calamity, but it makes us also impatient, and imbitters our spirit in the sufferance: it cries aloud for vengeance, and so torments men before the time even with such fearful outcries and horrid alarms, that their hell begins before the fire is kindled. It hinders our prayers, and consequently makes us hopeless and helpless. It perpetually affrights the conscience, unless by its frequent stripes it brings a callousness and an insensible damnation on it. It makes us to lose all that which Christ purchased for us, all the blessings of his providence, the comforts of his Spirit, the aids of his grace, the light of his countenance, the hopes of his glory; it makes us enemies to God, and to be hated by him more than he hates a dog: and with a dog shall be his portion to eternal ages; with this only difference, that they shall both be equally excluded from heaven, but the dog shall not, and the sinner shall, descend into hell; and, which is the confirmation of all evil, for a transient sin God shall inflict an eternal death. Well might it be said in the words of God by the prophet, *Ponam Babylonem in possessionem erinacei*, 'Babylon shall be the possession of a hedgehog:' that is, a sinner's dwelling, encompassed round with thorns, and sharp prickles, afflictions and uneasiness all over. So that he

that wishes his sin big and prosperous, wishes his bee as big as a bull, and his hedgehog like an elephant: the pleasure of the honey would not cure the mighty sting; and nothing make recompense, or be a good, equal to the evil of an eternal ruin. But of this there is no end. I sum up all with the saying of Publius Mimus; *Tolerabilior est qui mori jubet, quam qui male vivere,* "He is more to be endured that puts a man to death, than he that betrays him into sin:"—for the end of this is 'death eternal.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON IX.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 29.

PART I.

PRELIMINARY observations on the prudence of holding one's peace. But by the use of the tongue God has distinguished us from beasts; and by the well or ill using it we are distinguished from one another; and therefore, although silence be perfectly innocent, yet it is rather the state of death than life. The tongue, in fact, is the band of human intercourse, and makes men apt to unite in societies: by it we sing the praises of God; by it our tables are made to differ from mangers, our cities from deserts, our churches from herds of cattle, &c. But the tongue is a fountain both of bitter waters and of pleasant: it sends forth blessing and cursing: it praises God, and rails at men, &c. This topic dilated on. Subjects of discourse proposed. 1. The vices of the tongue. 2. Its duty and proper employment.

I. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth:* πᾶς ὁ σαπρὸς λόγος· corrupt or 'filthy' communication: so we read it; and it seems properly to note such communication as ministers to wantonness: this topic enlarged on.

But the word which the Apostle uses means more than this: meanings of the word σαπρὸς given; by which it is shown that we are forbidden to use all language that is in any sense corrupted, unreasonable, or useless; language proceeding from old iniquity or evil habits, called, in the style of Scripture, *the remains of the old man*, &c. Under this is forbidden, 1. useless, vain, and trifling conversation: 2. slander and calumny:

3. dissolute, wanton, tempting conversation; and its worst ingredient, flattery.

I. First of trifling, vain, and useless conversation. *Let no vain communication proceed out of your mouth.* The first part of this inordination is *talking too much;* concerning which, because there is no rule or just measure for the quantity, discourse must take its estimate by the matter and end; and must change according to its circumstances and appendages. This point illustrated. Evils of *talking over much* considered; as well as the nature of *idle words*, such as are not useful to edification and instruction. Remarks on the expression, *every word that is idle, or empty of business.*

The case of conscience stated in this matter: I. That the words of our blessed Saviour, being spoken to the Jews, were intended as they best and most commonly understood them; and by *vain* they understood *false* or *lying*, not useless or imprudent, &c. II. Of every idle word we shall give account; but yet so, that sometimes the judgment shall fall on the words, not on the persons, who shall merely have no honor or fair return from such discourses. III. If all unprofitable discourses be reckoned for idle words, and put on the account, yet even the capacities of profit are so large and numerous, that no man hath cause to complain that his tongue is too much restrained by this severity: this topic enlarged on. IV. Although in the latitude thus given, a man's *discourse* may be free and safe from judgment, yet *he himself* is not, unless he designs it, by an habitual and general purpose, to good and wise ends: concerning which he may, by the following measures, best take his accounts:

1. Let him speak nothing that can minister to vice, willingly and by observation.

2. If any thing be of a suspicious and dubious nature, let him decline to publish it.

3. Let him, by a prudent moral care, watch over his words.

4. Let him offer up to God in his prayers all his words, and then look to it, that he speak nothing unworthy to be offered.

5. Let him often interweave discourses of religion, glorifications of God, instructions to his brethren, &c. not only to sanctify the order of his discourses, but to call him back to retirement and sober thoughts, lest he wander and be carried off too far into the wild regions of impertinence.

V. This account is not to be taken by little traverses and intercourses of speech; but by greater measures, and more discernible portions; such as are commensurate to valuable portions of our time, for which every man is sure to be called to account: this topic enlarged on; and the evils of much talking pointed out.

These and many more such have given great advantages to silence, and made it to be esteemed an act of discipline and great religion: recommendation and practice of it among the ancients and early Christians, &c.

PART II.

Hitherto general excess in talking has been considered, without mention made of particulars. But because it is a principle and parent of much evil, it is with great caution to be cured, and the evil consequences will quickly disband. Some considerations on this point proposed.

1. Plutarch advises that "such men should give themselves to writing:" but the experience of the world has confuted this.

2. Some advise, that such persons should associate with grave and wise men, before whom the better parts of discourse only are usually brought forward. And this is apt to give assistance by the help of modesty, &c.

3. A consideration of the dangers and consequent evils hath some efficacy to restrain loose talking, by the help of fear and prudent apprehension, &c.

4. Some advise that such persons should change their speech into business and action: but these are not sufficient for the cure alone, unless we add retirement: this shown.

5. Others advise that the employment of the tongue be changed into religion; and if there be an *itch of talking*, let it be in matters of religion, pious discourses, &c. But this cure will, it is feared, be improper or insufficient: for in prayers, &c. a multitude of words is sometimes foolish, often dangerous; and of all things we must beware not to offer unto God *the sacrifice of fools*, &c.

6. But God's grace is sufficient to all that will make use of it; and there is no cure for this evil, but the direct obeying of counsel, and submitting to precept, and fearing the divine threatening; always remembering, that *of every word a man speaks, he shall give account*, &c.

The vain tongue, and the trifling conversation, have some proper evils; as, 1. *stultiloquium*, or the speaking like a fool; 2. *scurrilitas*, or immoderate and absurd jesting; 3. the revealing of secrets.

1. Concerning stultiloquy, it is to be observed that the masters of spiritual life mean not the talk and useless babble of weak and ignorant persons, &c. but the *lubricum verbi*, as St. Ambrose calls it, "the slipping with the tongue," by which prating persons betray the vanity of their spirit, and discover *the hidden man of the heart*. No prudence is a sufficient guard, when a man is in perpetual floods of talk; and hence it comes that at every corner of the mouth a folly peeps out, or a mischief creeps in. A little pride and a great deal of vanity will soon escape, and many men will soon talk themselves into anger, &c.

2. Concerning scurrility, or foolish jesting, the Apostle so joins it with the former, μωρολογία, *foolish speaking*, &c. that some think this to be explicative of the other: reason given why this seems to be so. Subject dilated on, and illustrated.

It should be considered how miserable every sinner is, if he does not deeply and truly repent; and how discordant with such repentance is foolish, inconsiderate jesting. But the whole state of the question is thus briefly stated. 1. If jesting be unseasonable, it is also intolerable. 2. If it be inordinate, it is also criminal. 3. If it be in an ordinary person, it is dangerous; if in an eminent, consecrated, or wise man, it is scandalous. 4. If the matter be not of an indifferent nature, it becomes sinful by giving countenance to vice, or ridicule to virtue. 5. If it be not watched, so that it complies with all that hear, it becomes offensive and injurious. 6. If it be not intended to fair and lawful purposes, it is sour in the using, 7. If it be frequent, it combines and clusters into formal sin. 8. If it mingles with any sin, it puts on its nature, &c.

Instances given of eminent men in the ancient church whose conversation was cheerful and pleasant: usefulness of this descanted on. But when the jest hath teeth and nails; when it is loose, wanton, and unseasonable; when it serves ill purposes, or spends better time; it is then the drunkenness of the soul, &c.

But above all the abuses which dishonor the tongues of men, nothing more deserves the whip of an exterminating angel, or the stings of scorpions, than profane jesting; which is a bringing of the Spirit of God to partake of the follies of man: this topic enlarged on.

3. The third instance of vain, trifling conversation, and immoderate talking, is the revealing of secrets; which is a dismantling and rending of the robe from the privacies of human intercourse. The evils of this practice enumerated. In one case it puts on new circumstances of deformity; when he that ministers to the souls of men, shall publish the secrets of a conscience, turning an accuser, weakening the heart of penitents, and driving them from their remedy by making it intolerable: this topic enlarged on.

The proper evils of the vain and trifling tongue have been enumerated: but hither also some other irregularities of speech are to be referred, although they are of a mixed nature.

1. The first of these is common swearing, against which St. Chrysostom spends twenty homilies; and by the number and weight of arguments hath left this testimony: that it is a foolish vice, but hard to be cured; infinitely unreasonable, but strangely prevailing, &c.: this topic fully dilated on.

2. The next appendage of vain and trifling speech is contention; wrangling, and perpetual talk, proceeding from the spirit of contradiction; the clamors and noises of which folly St. Paul reproves: *Let all bitterness and clamor be put away.* Conclusion.

PART III.

II. The mischiefs above cited from vain and foolish talking, are inferior to two which remain behind: 1. the spirit of detraction: 2. the spirit of flattery. The first is vile, but the second is worse; the very poison of the soul: and both are to be avoided like death itself.

1. Let no calumny, no slandering, &c. proceed out of your mouth. The first sort of this is that which the Apostle calls *whispering;* which means to abuse our neighbor secretly, by telling a private story about him; wherein the man plays a sure game, as he supposes; doing a mischief without a witness. Evils of this crime enlarged on, as the destroyer of friendship, of the peace of families, of the vital parts of charity, &c.

2. But such tongues as these, where they dare, and where they safely can, love to speak louder; and then it is *detraction;* when men, under the color of friendship, will wound a person's reputation, speaking some things of him fairly, in order that they may be believed without suspicion when they speak evil: this topic illustrated. This is what the Apostle calls κατηγορίαν,

a crafty and deceitful way of hurting, which renders a man's tongue as venomous as that of a serpent.

3. But the next sort is more violent; and that is, *railing* or reviling; which is often the vice of boys and rich men, proceeding from folly or pride. This is that evil which possessed those of whom the Psalmist speaks: *Our tongues are our own; we are they that ought to speak: who is Lord over us?* But St. James declares that *the tongue is an unruly member which no man can tame.* Our blessed Saviour, in restraining this hostility of the tongue, threatens hell fire to them that call their brother *fool:* evils of this practice farther dilated on.

4. The fourth instance of *calumniating*, filthy communication, is that which we properly call slander; the inventing evil things, or falsely imputing crimes to our neighbor. This is the direct murder of the tongue; for life and death (says the Hebrew proverb) are in the hand of the tongue: this topic illustrated: peculiar evils of it pointed out; as that it lies in the face of heaven, and abuses the ears of justice; it oppresses the innocent, defeats all the charity of laws, and calls on the name and testimony of God to seal an injury, &c.

5. The last instance of this evil now represented is *cursing;* concerning which this may be said, that although the causeless curse shall return on the tongue that spake it, yet, because very often there is a fault on both sides, when there is reviling or cursing on either, the danger of a cursing tongue is highly to be declined, as the biting of a mad dog, or the tongue of a smitten serpent. This topic enlarged on.

III. The third part of filthy communication, that in which the devil does the most mischief, is the spirit of *flattery*. Evils of this vice in common cases dilated on: but he that persuades his friend, who is unchaste in morals, that he is a holy and pure person; or that his looseness is a sign of a quick spirit, &c. this man hath given the greatest advantage to his friend's mischief; he hath made it grow in all the dimensions of the sin,

till it becomes intolerable, and perhaps unpardonable. And what a fearful destruction and contradiction of friendship is this! the topic enlarged on. Various species of flattery described; for example, 1. Some flatter by giving great names, and propounding great examples; as the Egyptians hung a tumbler's rope on their prince, and a piper's whistle, because they called their Ptolemy by the name of Apollo, their god of music.

2. Others flatter by imitation, encouraging vice by making it popular and common.

3. Some pretend rusticity, or downright plainness, and on the confidence of that they humor their friend's vice, and flatter him to his ruin.

4. Some will dispraise themselves, that their friend may think better of himself, or less severely of his faults.

5. Others will reprove their friend for a trifle, as if that were all; for an honest man would have told him the worst.

6. Some will laugh and make a sport of vice, and hear a friend's narrative of his adultery, or drunkenness, &c. with merriment; as if the everlasting ruin of his friend were a very good jest.

One caution in this case, however, is to be observed, viz. that we do not think all praise given to our friend to be flattery; for sometimes praise is the best conveyance for a precept and the encourager of infant virtue. Concluding remarks.

PART IV.

It was an old proverb, that "men teach us to speak, and God teaches us to hold our tongue." Advantages of proper silence dilated on. Plutarch said well, that "to be taught first to be silent, then to speak well and handsomely, is education fit for a prince." And that is St. Paul's method here: first we are taught how to restrain our tongues, in the

foregoing instances; and now we are called on to employ them in religion.

We must speak *that which is good;* any thing that may serve the ends of God and of our neighbor, in the measures of religion and usefulness: this topic enlarged on; whereby it is shown that our speech must be such, *that it may minister grace,* something that may please and profit men, according as they shall need; all which is reduced to these three heads: to instruct, to comfort, to reprove.

1. Our conversation must be διδακτικὸς, 'apt to teach:' for since all our hopes depend on obedience to God, and all obedience is grounded in faith, and faith is founded naturally in the understanding, it is not only reasonably to be expected, but is experimentally felt, that in weak and ignorant understandings, there are no sufficient supports for the vigor of a holy life: he therefore that carries to the understanding of his brother notices of faith, incomes of spiritual propositions, and arguments of the Spirit, forwards him in the work and practices of a holy life: this topic dilated on.

2. Our conversation must be παράκλητος, *apt to comfort* the disconsolate: nor can men here below feel greater charity than this: for since half the duty of a Christian in this life consists in the exercise of passive graces, God hath sent some angels into the world, whose office is to refresh the sorrows of the poor, and to lighten the eyes of the disconsolate: he hath made some creatures whose powers are chiefly ordained to comfort. But this is not all. The third person of the Holy Trinity is known to us by the name and dignity of the *Holy Ghost, the Comforter;* and God glories in being *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort:* therefore to minister in this office, is to imitate the charities of heaven; and God hath fitted mankind for it: this subject enlarged on.

3. Our communication must in its just season be ἐλεγκτικός:

we must reprove our sinning brother; *for the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy*, says Solomon: we imitate the office of the great Shepherd, if we go *to seek and save that which was lost:* and it is a fearful thing to see a friend going to hell undisturbed, when the arresting him in his horrid progress may possibly make him to return: subject enlarged on. In the performance of this useful duty, the following measures are fit to be observed.

1. Let not your reproof be public and personal. If it be public, it must be general; if it be personal, it must be in private: and this is expressly commanded by our Saviour. But this caution is not always necessary; as in the case of a public and authorised person; where the crime is great, but not understood to be any at all; where certain circumstances of person allow it, as in the case of a bishop, &c.

2. Do not usually reprove thy brother for every thing; but for great things only: since that is the office of a tutor, not of a friend; and few men will suffer themselves to abide always under pupillage.

3. Use not liberty of reproof in the days of sorrow and affliction: for the calamity itself is sufficient to chastise the gaieties of sinning persons, and bring them to repentance, though it may be fit to insinuate a mention of the cause of that sorrow, in order to repentance and a cure: but severe and biting language is then out of season.

4. Avoid all evil appendages of this liberty: for to reprove a sinning brother is, at best, but an invidious employment, though a charitable one; therefore we must not make it hateful by adding reproach, scorn, violent expressions, scurrility, or bitter invectives: this topic enlarged on.

To the foregoing measures this piece of advice is lastly added; that no man should, at that time when he is reproved, give counsel and reproof to his reprover: for this betrays an

angry spirit, makes discord out of piety, and changes charity to wrangling.

Persuasives for men to use proper reproof, and for others to suffer it.

If it be asked whether every man is bound to reprove every person, if he sins, and he converse with him; it is answered, that if it should be so, it were to no purpose, and for it there is no commandment. Every man that can, may instruct him that wants it; but every man may not reprove him that is already instructed. Conclusion.

SERMON IX.

THE GOOD AND EVIL TONGUE.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 29.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

PART I.

He that had an ill memory, did wisely comfort himself by reckoning the advantages he had by his forgetfulness: for by this means he was hugely secured against malice and ambition; for his anger went off with the short notice and observation of the injury; and he saw himself unfit for the businesses of other men, or to make records in his head, and undertake to conduct the intrigues of affairs of a multitude, who was apt to forget the little accounts of his own seldom reading. He also remembered this, that his pleasures in reading books were more frequent, while he remembered but little of yesterday's study, and to-morrow the book is news, and, with its novelties, gives him fresh entertainment, while the retaining brain lays the book aside, and is full already. Every book is new to an ill memory, and one long book is a library, and its parts return fresh as the morning, which becomes a new day, though by the revolution of the same sun. Besides these, it brought him to tell truth for fear of shame, and in mere necessity made his speech little, and his discoursings short; because the web drawn from his brain was soon spun out, and his fountain grew quickly dry, and left running through forgetfulness. He that is not eloquent

and fair-spoken, hath some of these comforts to plead in excuse of his ill fortune or defective nature. For if he can but hold his peace, he shall be sure not to be troublesome to his company, nor marked for lying, nor become tedious with multiplicity of idle talk; he shall be presumed wise, and oftentimes is so; he shall not feel the wounds of contention, nor be put to excuse an ill-taken saying, nor sigh for the folly of an irrecoverable word: if his fault be that he hath not spoken, that can at any time be mended; but if he sinned in speaking, it cannot be unspoken again. Thus he escapes the dishonor of not being believed, and the trouble of being suspected; he shall never fear the sentence of judges, nor the decrees of courts, high reproaches, or the angry words of the proud, the contradiction of the disputing man, or the thirst of talkers. By these, and many other advantages, he that holds his peace, and he that cannot speak, may please themselves; and he may at least have the rewards and effects of solitariness, if he misses some of the pleasures of society. But by the use of the tongue, God hath distinguished us from beasts, and by the well or ill using it, we are distinguished from one another; and therefore, though silence be innocent as death, harmless as a rose's breath to a distant passenger, yet it is rather the state of death than life: and therefore when the Egyptians sacrificed to Harpocrates, their god of silence, in the midst of their rites they cried out, γλῶσσα δαίμων, "the tongue is an angel," good or bad, that is as it happens; silence was to them a god, but the tongue is greater; it is the band of human intercourse, and makes men apt to unite in societies and republics: and I remember what one of the ancients said, that we are better in the company of a known dog, than of a man whose speech is not known, *ut externus alieno non sit hominis vice;* "a stranger to a stranger in his language, is not as a man to a man;" for by voices and homilies, by questions and answers, by narratives and invectives, by counsel and reproof, by praises and hymns, by prayers and glorifications, we serve God's glory, and the necessities of men; and by the tongue our tables are made to differ from mangers, our cities from deserts, our churches from herds of beasts, and flocks of sheep. 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,' spoken by the tongues of men

and angels; and the blessed spirits in heaven cease not from saying, night and day, their Τρισάγιον, "their song of glory," to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever; and then our employment shall be glorious as our state, when our tongues shall to eternal ages sing hallelujahs to their Maker and Redeemer; and therefore, since nature hath taught us to speak, and God requires it, and our thankfulness obliges us, and our necessities engage us, and charity sometimes calls for it, and innocence is to be defended, and we are to speak in the cause of the oppressed, and open our mouths in the cause of God, and it is always a seasonable prayer, that God would open our lips, that our mouth may do the work of heaven, and declare his praises, and show forth his glory; it concerns us to take care that nature be changed into grace, necessity into choice, that, while we speak the greatness of God, and minister to the needs of our neighbor, and do the works of life and religion, of society and prudence, we may be fitted to bear a part in the songs of angels, when they shall rejoice at the feast of the marriage-supper of the Lamb. But the tongue is a fountain both of bitter waters and of pleasant; it sends forth blessing and cursing; it praises God, and rails at men; it is sometimes set on fire, and then it puts whole cities in combustion; it is unruly, and no more to be restrained than the breath of a tempest; it is volatile and fugitive: reason should go before it, and when it does not, repentance comes after it; it was intended for an organ of the divine praises, but the devil often plays on it, and then it sounds like the screech-owl, or the groans of death; sorrow and shame, folly and repentance, are the notes and formidable accents of that discord. We all are naturally λογόφιλοι, "lovers of speech," more or less; and God reproves it not, provided that we be also φιλόλογοι, "wise and material, useful and prudent, in our discourses." For since speech is for conversation, let it be also charitable and profitable, let it be without sin, but not without profit and grace to the hearers, and then it is as God would have it; and this is the precept of the text, first telling us what we should avoid, and then telling us what we should pursue; what our discourse ought not to be, and, secondly, what it ought to be. There being no more variety in the structure of the words, I shall, 1. discourse

of the vices of the tongue; 2. of its duty and proper employment.

I. 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth;' πᾶς ὁ σαπρὸς λόγος, corrupt or 'filthy' communication; so we read it: and it seems properly to note such communication as ministers to wantonness; such as are the Fesceannines of Ausonius, the excrement and spume of Martial's verse, and the Ephesiaca of Xenophon: indeed, this is such a rudeness as is not to be admitted into civil conversation; and is wittily noted by the Apostle, charging that 'fornication should not be once named among them, as becometh saints;' not meaning that the vice should not have its name and filthy character, but that nothing of it be named, in which it can be tempting or offensive; nothing tending to it, or teaching of it, should be named; we must not have πόρνον λόγον, 'fornication in our talk;' that is such a baseness, that it not only grieves the Divine Spirit, but dishonors all its channels and conveyances: the proper language of the sin is not fit to be used so much as in reproof; and therefore, I have sometimes wondered, how it came to pass, that some of the ancients, men wise and modest, chaste and of sober spirits, have fallen into a fond liberty of declamation against uncleanness, using such words which bring that sin on the stage of fancy, and offend *auriculas non calentes*, "sober and chaste ears." For who can, without blushing, read Seneca describing the looking-glass of Hostius, or the severe but looser words of Persius, or the reproofs of St. Jerome himself, that great patron of virginity, and exacter of chastity? yet more than once he reproves filthy things with unhandsome language: St. Chrysostom makes an apology for them that do so; ἐὰν μὲν γὰρ σεμνῶς εἰπῇς, οὐ δυνήσῃ καθικέσθαι τοῦ ἀκούοντος· ἐὰν δὲ βουληθῇς καθάψασθαι, σφοδρῶς ἀνάγκην ἔχεις ἀπογυμνῶσαι σαφέστερον τὰ λεγόμενα,* "you cannot profit the hearers unless you discover the filthiness," for the withdrawing the curtain is shame and confutation enough for so great a baseness; and chirurgeons care not how they defile their hand, so they may do profit to the patient. And, indeed, there is a material difference in the design of him that speaks;

* Homil. 4. in ep. Rom.

if he speaks ἐξ οἰκείου πάθους, "according to his secret affection" and private folly, it is certainly intolerable: but yet if he speaks ἀπὸ κηδεμονίας, "out of a desire to profit" the hearer, and cure the criminal, though it be in the whole kind of it honest and well meant; yet, that it is imprudent,

> (Irritamentum Veneris languentis, et acres
> Divitis urticæ)*

and not wholly to be excused by the fair meaning, will soon be granted by all who know what danger and infection it leaves on the fancy, even by those words by which the spirit is instructed. *Ab hac scabie teneamus ungues;* it is not good to come near the leprosy, though to cleanse the leper's skin.

But the word which the Apostle uses, σαπρὸς λόγος, means more than this. Σαπρὸν οὐ τὸ μοχθηρὸν φαῦλον, ἀλλὰ τὸ παλαιὸν, said Eupolis; and so it signifies "musty, rotten, and outworn with age;" εἰρήνης σαπρᾶς, "rusty peace," so Aristophanes (Pax, 554.): and, according to this acceptation of the word, we are forbidden to use all language that is in any sense corrupted, unreasonable, or useless; language proceeding from an old iniquity, evil habits, or unworthy customs, called, in the style of Scripture, "the remains of the old man," and by the Greeks, "doting" or "talking fondly;" τὸ παιδαρίον εἶ, καὶ φρονεῖς ἀρχαϊκά· "the boy talks like an old dotard." 2. Σαπρὸς signifies "wicked, filthy, or reproachful;" σαπρὸν, αἰσχρὸν, ἀκάθαρτον, "any thing that is in its own nature criminal and disgraceful, any language that ministers to mischief." But it is worse than all this: σαπρὸς ὁ ἀφανισμὸς, "it is a deletery, an extinction of all good;" for ἀφανίζομαι is φθείρω, λυμαίνομαι, καταλύω, it is "a destruction, an entire corruption," of all morality; and to this sense is that of Menander, quoted by St. Paul, φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρῆσθ' ὁμιλίαι κακαί· 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' And therefore, under this word is comprised all the evil of the tongue, that wicked instrument of the unclean spirit, in the capacity of all the appellatives. 1. Here is forbidden the useless, vain, and trifling conversation, the Βεελζεβοὺλ, "the god

* Juv. xi. 165.

of flies," so is the devil's name; he rules by these little things, by trifles and vanity, by idle and useless words, by the intercourses of a vain conversation. 2. The devil is Διάβολος, "an accuser of the brethren," and the calumniating, slandering, and undervaluing, detracting tongue does his work; that is, λόγος αἰσχρὸς, the second that I named; for αἰσχρότης is λοιδορία, μῖσος, so Hesychius; it is "slander, hatred, and calumny." 3. But the third is Ἀπολλύων, the devil's worst appellative, "the destroyer," the dissolute, wanton, tempting, destroying conversation; and its worst instance of all is flattery, that malicious, cozening devil, that strengthens our friend in sin, and ruins him from whom we have received, and from whom we expect, good. Of these in order: and first, of the trifling, vain, useless, and impertinent conversation, σαπρὸς λόγος, 'Let no *vain* communication proceed out of your mouth.'

1. The first part of this inordination is *multiloquium*, "talking too much;" concerning which, because there is no rule or just measure for the quantity; and it is as lawful, and sometimes as prudent, to tell a long story as a short, and two as well as one, and sometimes ten as well as two; all such discourses are to take their estimate by the matter and the end, and can only be altered by their circumstances and appendages. Much speaking is sometimes necessary, sometimes useful, sometimes pleasant; and when it is none of all these, though it be tedious and imprudent, yet it is not always criminal. Such was the humor of the gentleman Martial speaks of: he was a good man, and full of sweetness and justice and nobleness, but he would read his nonsense-verses to all companies; at the public games, and in private feasts, in the baths, and on the beds, in public and in private, to sleeping and waking people.

> Vis, quantum facias mali, videre?
> Vir justus, probus, innocens timeris.*

Every one was afraid of him; and though he was good, yet he was not to be endured. The evil of this is very considerable in the accounts of prudence, and the effects and plaisance of conversation: and the ancients described its evil well by a pro-

* Mart. iii. 44. 17.

verbial expression; for when a sudden silence arose, they said that Mercury was entered on, meaning, that he being their *loquax numen*, their "prating god," yet that quitted him not, but all men stood on their guard, and called for aid and rescue, when they were seized on so tedious an impertinence. And, indeed, there are some persons so full of nothings, that, like the straight sea of Pontus, they perpetually empty themselves by their mouth, making every company or single person they fasten on to be their Propontis; such an one as was Anaximenes, λέξεων ποταμὸς, νοῦ δὲ σταλαγμός· "He was an ocean of words, but a drop of understanding." And if there were no more in this than the matter of prudence, and the proper measures of civil conversation, it would yet highly concern old men,* and young men and women,† to separate from their persons the reproach of their sex and age, that modesty of speech be the ornament of the youthful, and a reserved discourse be the testimony of the old man's prudence. *Adolescens* from ἀδολέσχης, said one: "a young man is a talker for want of wit," and an old man for want of memory; for while he remembers the things of his youth, and not how often he hath told them in his old age, he grows in love with the trifles of his youthful days, and thinks the company must do so too: but he canonizes his folly, and by striving to bring reputation to his first days, he loses the honor of his last. But this thing is considerable to farther issues; for though no man can say, that much speaking is a sin, yet the Scripture says, *in multiloquio peccatum non deerit*; 'Sin goes along with it, and is an ingredient in the whole composition.' For it is impossible but a long and frequent discourse must be served with many passions, and they are not always innocent; for he that loves to talk much, must *rem corradere*, "scrape materials together" to furnish out the scenes and long orations; and some talk themselves into anger, and some furnish out their dialogues with the lives of others; either they detract, or censure, or they flatter themselves, and tell their own stories with friendly circumstances,

* Supellex ejus garrulitas. Comœd.

† Muliebre ingenium proluvium. Accius in Andromeda.—Sola laboranti potuit succurrere lunæ. Juv. vi. 443.

and pride creeps up the sides of the discourse; and the man entertains his friend with his own panegyric; or the discourse looks one way and rows another, and more minds the design than its own truth; and most commonly will be so ordered, that it shall please the company (and that truth or honest plainness seldom does); or there is a bias in it, which the more of weight and transportation it hath, the less it hath of ingenuity. *Non credo auguribus qui aureis rebus divinant;* like soothsayers, men speak fine words to serve ends, and then they are not believed, or at last are found liars, and such discourses are built up to serve the ministries or pleasures of the company, but nothing else. Pride and flattery, malice and spite, self-love and vanity, these usually wait on much speaking; and the reward of it is, that the persons grow contemptible and troublesome, they engage in quarrels, and are troubled to answer exceptions; some will mistake them, and some will not believe them, and it will be impossible that the mind should be perpetually present to a perpetual talker, but they will forget truth and themselves, and their own relations. And on this account it is, that the doctors of the primitive church do literally expound those minatory words of our blessed Saviour; 'Verily I say unto you, of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account at the day of judgment.'* And by idle words, they understand, such as are not useful to edification and instruction. So St. Basil: "So great is the danger of an idle word, that though a word be in its own kind good, yet, unless it be directed to the edification of faith, he is not free from danger that speaks it:"† to this purpose are the words of St. Gregory; "While the tongue is not restrained from idle words," *ad temeritatem stultæ increpationis efferatur*, "it is made wild, or may be brought forth to rashness and folly:" and therein lies the secret of the reproof, *a periculo liber non est, et ad temeritatem efferatur*, "the man is not free from danger, and he may grow rash,"‡ and foolish, and run into crimes, whilst he gives his tongue the reins, and lets it wander, and so it may be fit to be reproved, though in its nature it were innocent. I deny not, but sometimes they are more severe. St.

* Matt. xii. 36. † In Reg. brevior. ‡ Lib. 7. Moral.

Gregory calls every word "vain" or "idle," *quod aut ratione justæ necessitatis, aut intentione piæ utilitatis caret:** and St. Jerome calls it "vain," *quod sine utilitate et loquentis dicitur et audientis*, "which profits neither the speaker nor the hearer."† The same is affirmed by St. Chrysostom ‡ and Gregory Nyssen§ on Ecclesiastes; and the same seems intimated in the word κενὸν ῥῆμα, or ῥῆμα ἀργὸν, as it is in some copies, "every word that is idle, or *empty* of business." But, for the stating of the case of conscience, I have these things to say.

1. That the words of our blessed Saviour, being spoken to the Jews, were so certainly intended as they best and most commonly understood; and by "vain" they understood "false" or "lying," not "useless" or "imprudent;" and yet so, though our blessed Saviour hath not so severely forbidden every empty, insignificant discourse; and yet he hath forbidden every lie, though it be *in genere bonorum*, as St. Basil's expression is; that is, "though it be in the intention charitable, or in the matter innocent."

2. 'Of every idle word we shall give account;' but yet so, that sometimes the κρίμα, 'the judgment,' shall fall on the words, not on the persons; they be hay and stubble, useless and impertinent, light and easy, the fire shall consume them, and himself shall escape with that loss: he shall then have no honor, no fair return for such discourses, but they shall with loss and prejudice be rejected and cast away.

3. If all unprofitable discourses be reckoned for idle words, and put on the account, yet even the capacities of profit are so large and numerous, that no man hath cause to complain that his tongue is too much restrained by this severity. For in all the ways in which he can do himself good or his neighbor, he hath his liberty; he is only to secure the words from being directly criminal, and himself from being arrested with a passion, and then he may reckon it lawful, even on the severest account, to discourse freely, while he can instruct, or while he can please, his neighbor;

Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare ||———

* C. 17. ubi sup. † Matt. xii. ‡ In Ps. cxviii.
§ Cap. 1. || Hor. A. P. 333.

while himself gets a fair opinion and a good name, apt to serve honest and fair purposes; he may discourse himself into a friendship, or help to preserve it; he may serve the works of art or nature, of business public or private, the needs of his house, or the uses of mankind; he may increase learning, or confirm his notices, cast in his symbol of experience and observation, till the particulars may become a proverbial sentence and a rule; he may serve the ends of civility and popular addresses, or may instruct his brother or himself, by something, which, at that time, shall not be reduced to a precept by way of meditation, but is of itself apt at another time to do it; he may speak the praises of the Lord by discoursing of any of the works of creation, and himself or his brother may afterward remember it to that purpose; he may counsel or teach, reprove or admonish, call to mind a precept, or disgrace a vice, reprove it by a parable or a story, by way of idea or witty representment; and he that can find talk beyond all this, discourse that cannot become useful in any one of these purposes, may well be called a prating man, and expect to give account of his folly, in the days of recompense.

4. Although, in this latitude, a man's discourse may be free and safe from judgment, yet the man is not, unless himself design it to good and wise purposes; not always actually, but by an habitual and general purpose. Concerning which he may, by these measures, best take his accounts:

1. That he be sure to speak nothing that may minister to a vice, willingly and by observation.

2. If any thing be of a suspicious and dubious nature, that he decline to publish it.

3. That, by a prudent moral care, he watch over his words, that he do none of this injury and unworthiness.

4. That he offer up to God in his prayers all his words, and then look to it, that he speak nothing unworthy to be offered.

5. That he often interweave discourses of religion, and glorifications of God, instructions to his brother, and ejaculations of his own, something or other not only to sanctify the order of his discourses, but to call him back into retirement and sober thoughts, lest he wander and be carried off too far into the wild regions of impertinence; and this Zeno calls γλῶσσαν

εἰς νοῦν ὑποβρέξαι, "to dip our tongues in understanding." In all other cases the rule is good, Ἢ λέγε τί σιγῆς κρεῖττον, ἢ σιγὴν ἔχε, "Either keep silence, or speak something that is better than it;"* *ἢ σιγὴν καίριον ἢ λόγον ὠφέλιμον*, so Isocrates, consonantly enough to this evangelical precept, "a seasonable silence, or a profitable discourse," choose you whether; for whatsoever cometh of more, is sin, or else is folly at hand, and will be sin at a distance.

5. This account is not to be taken by little traverses and intercourses of speech, but by greater measures, and more discernible portions, such as are commensurate to valuable portions of time; for however we are pleased to throw away our time, and are weary of many parts of it, yet are impatiently troubled when all is gone; yet we are as sure to account for every considerable portion of our time, as for every sum of money we receive; and in this it was, that St. Bernard gave caution, *Nemo parvi æstimet tempus, quod in verbis consumitur otiosis*, "Let no man think it a light matter, that he spend his precious time in idle words;"† let no man be so weary of what flies away too fast, and cannot be recalled, as to use arts and devices to pass the time away in vanity, which might be rarely spent in the interests of eternity. Time is given us to repent in, to appease the divine anger, to prepare for and hasten to the society of angels, to stir up our slackened wills, and enkindle our cold devotions, to weep for our daily iniquities, and to sigh after, and work for, the restitution of our lost inheritance; and the reward is very inconsiderable, that exchanges all this for the pleasure of a voluble tongue: and indeed this is an evil, that cannot be avoided by any excuse that can be made for words that are, in any sense, idle,—though, in all senses of their own nature and proper relations, they be innocent. They are a throwing away something of that, which is to be expended for eternity, and put on degrees of folly, according as they are tedious and expensive of time to no good purposes. I shall not after all this need to reckon more of the evil consequent to the vain and great talker; but if these already reckoned were not a heap big enough, I could easily

* Eurip. Beck. t. ii. 482. † Serm. de Triplici Custodia.

add this great evil: that the talking man makes himself artificially deaf, being like a man in the steeple when the bells ring: you talk to a deaf man, though you speak wisely;

> Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μὴ στέγοντα πιμπλάναι
> Σοφοῦς ἐκαντλῶν ἀνδρὶ μὴ σοφῷ λόγους.*

Good counsel is lost on him, and he hath served all his ends when he pours out whatsoever he took in; for he therefore loaded his vessel, that he might pour it forth into the sea.

These and many more evils, and the perpetual unavoidable necessity of sinning by much talking, hath given great advantages to silence, and made it to be esteemed an act of discipline and great religion. St. Romualdus, on the Syrian mountain, severely kept a seven years' silence; and Thomas Cantipratensis tells of a religious person, in a monastery in Brabant, that spake not one word in sixteen years. But they are greater examples which Palladius tells of; Ammona, who lived with three thousand brethren in so great silence, as if he were an anchoret; but Theona was silent for thirty years together; and Johannes, surnamed Silentiarius, was silent for forty-seven years. But this morosity and sullenness are so far from being imitable and laudable, that if there were no direct prevarication of any commands expressed or intimated in Scripture, yet it must certainly either draw with it, or be itself, an infinite omission of duty; especially in the external glorifications of God, in the institution or advantages of others, in thanksgiving and public offices, and in all the effects and emanations of spiritual mercy. This was to make amends for committing many sins by omitting many duties; and, instead of digging out the offending eye, to pluck out both, that they might neither see the scandal nor the duty; for fear of seeing what they should not, to shut their eyes against all light. It was more prudent which was reported of St. Gregory Nazianzen, who made silence an act of discipline, and kept it a whole Lent in his religious retirements, *Cujus facti mei si causam quæris* (said he in his account he gives of it), *idcirco a sermone prorsus abstinui, ut sermonibus meis moderari discam;* "I then abstained

* Eurip. Beck. t. ii. 480.

wholly, that all the year after I might be more temperate in my talk." This was in him an act of caution; but how apt it was to minister to his purpose of a moderated speech for the future, is not certain; nor the philosophy of it, and natural efficacy, easy to be apprehended. It was also practised by way of penance, with indignation against the follies of the tongue, and the itch of prating; so to chastise that petulant member, as if there were a great pleasure in prating, which when it grew inordinate, it was to be restrained and punished like other lusts. I remember it was reported of St. Paul the hermit, scholar of St. Anthony, that, having once asked whether Christ or the old prophets were first, he grew so ashamed of his foolish question, that he spake not a word for three years following; and Sulpitius, as St. Jerome reports of him, being deceived by the Pelagians, spoke some fond things, and, repenting of it, held his tongue to his dying day, *ut peccatum quod loquendo contraxerat, tacendo penitus emendaret.* Though the pious mind is in such actions highly to be regarded, yet I am no way persuaded of the prudence of such a deadness and Libitinarian religion;

Murmura cum secum et rabiosa silentia rodunt,

so much importune silence was called, and understood to be a degree of stupidity and madness; for so physicians, among the signs of that disease in dogs, place their not barking; and yet, although the excess and unreasonableness of this may be well chastised by such a severe reproof, yet it is certain, in silence there is wisdom, and there may be deep religion. So Aretæus, describing the life of a studious man, among others, he inserts this, they are ἄχροοι, καὶ ἐν νεότητι γηραλέοι, καὶ ὑπ' ἐννοίας κωφοί· "without color, pale and wise when they are young, and, by reason of their knowlege, silent" as mutes, and dumb as the Seriphian frogs. And indeed it is certain, great knowlege, if it be without vanity, is the most severe bridle of the tongue. For so have I heard, that all the noises and prating of the pool, the croaking of frogs and toads, is hushed and appeased on the instant of bringing on them the light of a candle or torch. Every beam of reason and ray of knowlege checks the dissolutions of the tongue. But, *ut quisque contemptissimus et*

maximè ludibrio est, ita solutissimæ linguæ est, said Seneca; "Every man, as he is a fool and contemptible, so his tongue is hanged loose;" being like a bell, in which there is nothing but tongue and noise.

Silence therefore is the cover of folly, or the effect of wisdom; it is also religious; and the greatest mystic rites of any institution are ever the most solemn and the most silent; the words in use are almost made synonymous: 'There was silence made in heaven for awhile,' said St. John, who noted it on occasion of a great solemnity and mysterious worshippings or revelations to be made there. Ἦ μάλα τις θεὸς ἔνδον, "One of the gods is within," said Telemachus; on occasion of which his father reproved his talking.

> Σίγα, καὶ κατὰ σὸν νόον ἴσχανε, μηδ' ἐρέεινε·
> Αὕτη τοι δίκη ἐστὶ θεῶν, οἳ Ὄλυμπον ἔχουσιν.*

"Be thou also silent and say little; let thy soul be in thy hand, and under command: for this is the rite of the gods above." And I remember, that when Aristophanes† describes the religion in the temple of Æsculapius, ὁ πρόστολος, εἰπὼν, ἤν τις αἴσθηται ψόφον, Σιγᾷν: "The priest commanded great silence when the mysteriousness was nigh;" and so among the Romans;

> Ite igitur, pueri, linguis animisque faventes,
> Sertaque delubris et farra imponite cultris.

But now, although silence is become religious, and is wise, and reverend, and severe, and safe, and quiet, ἄδιψος, καὶ ἄλυπος, καὶ ἀνώδυνος, as Hippocrates affirms of it, "without thirst, and trouble, and anguish;" yet it must be καίριος, it must be "seasonable," and just, not commenced on chance or humor, not sullen and ill-natured, not proud and full of fancy, not pertinacious and dead, not mad and uncharitable, *nam sic etiam tacuisse nocet*. He that is silent in a public joy hath no portion in the festivity, or no thankfulness to him that gave the cause of it. And though, of all things in the world, a prating religion, and much talk in holy things, does most profane the mysteriousness of it, and dismantles its regards, and makes cheap

* Od. T. 40. † Plutus, Brunck. 670.

its reverence, and takes off fear and awfulness, and makes it loose and garish, like the laughters of drunkenness, yet even in religion there are seasons to speak; and it was sometimes 'pain and grief' to David to be silent; but yet, although tedious and dead silence hath not a just measure of praise and wisdom; yet the worst silence of a religious person is more tolerable and innocent than the usual pratings of the looser and foolish men. *Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiæ labiis meis*, said David; 'Put a guard, O Lord, unto my mouth, and a door unto my lips;' on which St. Gregory said well, *Non parietem, sed ostium petit, viz. quod aperitur et clauditur;* "He did not ask for a wall, but for a door; a door that might open and shut:" and it were well it were so indeed: *Labia tua sicut vitta coccinea;* so Christ commends his spouse in the Canticles; 'Thy lips are like a scarlet hair-lace,' that is, tied up with modesty from folly and dissolution: for however that few people offend in silence and keeping the door shut too much, yet, in opening it too hastily, and speaking too much and too foolishly, no man is without a load of guiltiness; and some mouths, like the gates of death,

Noctes atque dies patent—

"are open night and day," and he who is so, cannot be innocent. It is said of Cicero, he never spake a word which himself would fain have recalled, he spake nothing that repented him. St. Austin, in his seventh epistle to Marcellinus, says, it was the saying of a fool and a sot, not of a wise man; and yet I have read the same thing to have been spoken by the famous Abbot Pambo, in the primitive church; and if it could be well said of this man, who was sparing and severe in talk, it is certain, it could not be said of the other, who was a talking, bragging person.

SERMON IX.

PART II.

The consideration hitherto hath been of the immoderation and general excess in speaking, without descending to particular cases: but because it is a principle and parent of much evil, it is with great caution to be cured, and the evil consequents will quickly disband. But when we draw near to give counsel, we shall find, that on a talking person scarce any medicine will stick.

1. Plutarch advises that "such men should give themselves to writing," that, making an issue in the arm, it should drain the floods of the head; supposing, that if the humor were any way vented, the tongue might be brought to reason. But the experience of the world hath confuted this; and when Ligurinus had writ a poem, he talked of it to all companies he came in;* but, however, it can be no hurt to try: for some have been cured of bleeding at the nose, by opening a vein in the arm.

2. Some advise that such persons should keep company with their betters, with grave, and wise, and great persons, before whom men do not usually bring forth all, but the better parts, of their discourse: and this is apt to give assistance by the help of modesty; and might do well, if men were not apt to learn to talk more in the society of the aged, and, out of a desire to seem wise and knowing, be apt to speak before their opportunity.

3. Consideration of the dangers and consequent evils hath some efficacy in nature to restrain our looser talkings, by the help of fear and prudent apprehension. Ælian tells of the geese flying over the mountain Taurus;† that, for fear of eagles, nature hath taught them to carry stones in their mouths, till

* Mart. iii. 44.

† Ἕκαστος λίθον ἐνδακόντες, ὥσπεροῦν ἐμβαλόντες σφίσι στόμιον, διαπέτονται, κ. τ. λ. Vide c. 29. Schneid. p. 157.

they be past their danger: care of ourselves, desire of reputation, appetite of being believed, love of societies and fair compliances, fear of quarrels and misinterpretation, of law-suits and affronts, of scorn and contempt, of infinite sins, and consequently the intolerable wrath of God; these are the great endearments of prudent and temperate speech.

4. Some advise that such persons should change their speech into business and action; and it were well if they changed it into any good thing, for then the evil were cured; but action and business are not the cure alone, unless we add solitariness; for the experience of this last age hath made us to feel, that companies of working people have nursed up a strange religion; the first, second, and third part of which, is talking and folly, save only that mischief, and pride, and fighting, came in the retinue. But he that works, and works alone, he hath employment, and no opportunity. But this is but a cure of the symptom and temporary effect; but the disease may remain yet. Therefore,

5. Some advise that the business and employment of the tongue be changed into religion; and if there be a *pruritus*, or "itch" of talking, let it be in matters of religion, in prayers and pious discourses, in glorifications of God, and the wise sayings of Scripture and holy men; this indeed will secure the material part, and make that the discourses in their nature shall be innocent. But I fear this cure will either be improper or insufficient. For in prayers, multitude of words is sometime foolish, very often dangerous; and, of all things in the world, we must be careful we bring not to God 'the sacrifice of fools;' and the talking much of the things of Scripture hath ministered often to vanity and divisions. But therefore, whoever will use this remedy must never dwell long on any one instance, but by variety of holy duties entertain himself; for he may easily exceed his rule in any thing, but in speaking honorably of God, and in that let him enlarge himself as he can; he shall never come to equal, much less to exceed, that which is infinite.

6. But some men will never be cured without a cancer or a quinsy; and such persons are taught by all men what to do; for if they would avoid all company, as willingly as company

avoids them, they might quickly have a silence great as midnight, and prudent as the Spartan brevity. But God's grace is sufficient to all that will make use of it; and there is no way for the cure of this evil, but the direct obeying of a counsel, and submitting to the precept, and fearing the divine threatening: always remembering that 'of every word a man speaks, he shall give account at the day of judgment:' I pray God show us all a mercy in that day, and forgive us the sins of the tongue. Amen.

Cito lutum colligit amnis exundans, said St. Ambrose: let your language be restrained within its proper channels and measures; for, "if the river swells over the banks, it leaves nothing but dirt and filthiness behind;" and, besides the great evils and mischiefs of a wicked tongue,—the vain tongue, and the trifling conversation, hath some proper evils; 1. *stultiloquium*, or "speaking like a fool;" 2. *scurrilitas*, or "immoderate and absurd jesting;" and, 3. revealing secrets.

1. Concerning stultiloquy, it is to be observed, that the masters of spiritual life mean not the talk and useless babble of weak and ignorant persons; because in their proportions they may serve their little mistaken ends of civility and humanity, as seemingly to them as the strictest and most observed words of the wiser; if it be their best, their folly may be pitied, but not reproved; and to them there is no caution to be added, but that it were well if they would put the bridle into the hands of another, who may give them check when themselves cannot; and no wisdom can be required or useful to them, but to suspect themselves, and choose to be conducted by another. For so the little birds and laborious bees,—who, having no art and power of contrivance, no distinction of time, or foresight of new necessities, yet, being guided by the hand, and counselled by the wisdom of the Supreme Power, their Lord and ours,—do things with greater niceness and exactness of art, and regularity of time, and certainty of effect, than the wise counsellor, who, standing at the back of the prince's chair, guesses imperfectly, and counsels timorously, and thinks by interest, and determines extrinsical events by inward and unconcerning principles; because these have understanding, but it is less than the infinity of accidents and contingencies without; but the

other having none, are wholly guided by him that knows and determines all things: so it is in the imperfect designs and actions and discourses of weaker people; if they can be ruled by an understanding without, when they have none within, they shall receive this advantage, that their own passions shall not transport their minds, and the divisions and weakness of their own sense and notices shall not make them uncertain and indeterminate; and the measures they shall walk by, shall be disinterested, and even, and dispassionate, and full of observation.

But that which is here meant by stultiloquy, or foolish speaking, is the *lubricum verbi*, as St. Ambrose calls it, "the slipping with the tongue;" which prating people often suffer, whose discourses betray the vanity of their spirit, and discover 'the hidden man of the heart.' For no prudence is a sufficient guard, or can always stand *in excubiis*, "still watching," when a man is in perpetual floods of talk: for prudence attends after the manner of an angel's ministry; it is despatched on messages from God, and drives away enemies, and places guards, and calls on the man to awake, and bids him send out spies and observers, and then goes about his own ministries above: but an angel does not sit by a man as a nurse by the baby's cradle, watching every motion, and the lighting of a fly on the child's lip: and so is prudence; it gives rules, and proportions out our measures, and prescribes us cautions, and, by general influences orders our particulars; but he that is given to talk, cannot be secured by all this; the emissions of his tongue are beyond the general figures and lines of rule; and he can no more be wise in every period of a long and running talk, than a lutanist can deliberate and make every motion of his hand by the division of his notes, to be chosen and distinctly voluntary. And hence it comes, that at every corner of the mouth a folly peeps out, or a mischief creeps in. A little pride and a great deal of vanity will soon escape, while the man minds the sequel of his talk, and not that ugliness of humor, which the severe man, that stood by, did observe, and was ashamed of. Do not many men talk themselves into anger, screwing up themselves with dialogues of fancy, till they forget the company and themselves? And some men hate to be contradicted or interrupted, or to be

discovered in their folly; and some men being a little conscious, and not striving to amend by silence, they make it worse by discourse; a long story of themselves,—a tedious praise of another collaterally to do themselves advantage,—a declamation against a sin to undo the person, or oppress the reputation, of their neighbor,—unseasonable repetition of that which neither profits nor delights,—trifling contentions about a goat's beard, or the blood of an oyster,—anger and animosity, spite and rage,—scorn and reproach begun on questions which concern neither of the litigants,—fierce disputations,—strivings for what is past, and what shall never be: these are the events of the loose and unwary tongue; which are like flies and gnats on the margin of a pool; they do not sting like an asp, or bite deep as a bear; yet they can vex a man into a fever and impatience, and make him incapable of rest and counsel.

2. The second is scurrility, or foolish jesting. This the Apostle so joins with the former *μωρολογία*, 'foolish speaking, and jestings which are not convenient,'* that some think this to be explicative of the other, and that St. Paul, using the word *εὐτραπελία* (which all men before his time used in a good sense), means not that which indeed is witty and innocent, pleasant and apt for institution, but that which fools and parasites call *εὐτραπελία*, but indeed is *μωρολογία*: what they call facetiousness and pleasant wit, is indeed to all wise persons a mere stultiloquy, or talking like a fool; and that kind of jesting is forbidden. And indeed I am induced fully to this understanding of St. Paul's words, by the conjunctive particle *ἢ*, which he uses, *καὶ αἰσχρότης καὶ μωρολογία, ἢ εὐτραπελία*, 'and filthiness and foolish talking, or jesting;' just as in the succeeding verse, he joins *ἀκαθαρσία ἢ πλεονεξία*, 'uncleanness (so we read it) or covetousness;' one explicates the other; for by 'covetousness' is meant 'defraudation;' *πλεονέκτης, fraudator*, so St. Cyprian renders it: and *πλεονεκτεῖν* St. Jerome derives from *πλέον ἔχειν*, "to take more than a man should;" and therefore, when St. Paul said, 'Let no man circumvent his brother in any matter,' he expounds it of 'adultery;' and in this very place he

* Ephes. v. 4.

renders πλεονεξίαν, *stuprum*, 'lust;' and, indeed, it is usual in Scripture, that covetousness—being so universal, so original a crime, such a prolific sin,—be called by all the names of those sins by which it is either punished, or to which it tempts, or whereby it is nourished; and as here it is called 'uncleanness,' or 'corruption;' so in another place it is called 'idolatry.' But to return; this jesting, which St. Paul reproves, is a direct μωρολογία, or the jesting of mimics and players, that of the fool in the play, which, in those times, and long before, and long after, were of that licentiousness, that they would abuse Socrates or Aristides: and because the rabble were the laughers, they knew how to make them roar aloud with a slovenly and wanton word, when they understood not the salt and ingenuity of a witty and useful answer or reply; as is to be seen in the intertextures of Aristophanes' comedies. But in pursuance of this of St. Paul, the fathers of the church have been very severe in the censures of this liberty. St. Ambrose forbids all: *Non solum profusos, sed etiam omnes jocos declinandos arbitror;* "Not only the looser jestings, but even all are to be avoided;"* nay, *licet interdum joca honesta et suavia sint, tamen ab ecclesiæ horrent regula,* "the church allows them not, though they be otherwise honest and pleasant; for how can we use those things we find not in Holy Scriptures?" St. Basil gives reason for this severity: *Jocus facit animam remissam et erga præcepta Dei negligentem;* and, indeed, that cannot be denied; those persons whose souls are dispersed and ungathered by reason of a wanton humor to intemperate jesting, are apt to be trifling in their religion. St. Jerome is of the same opinion, and adds a commandment of a full authority, if at least the record was right; for he quotes a saying of our blessed Saviour out of the gospel of the Nazarenes; *Nunquam læti sitis, nisi cum fratrem vestrum in charitate videritis;* "Never be merry, but when you see your brother in charity:"† and when you are merry, St. James hath appointed a proper expression of it, and a fair entertainment to the passion; 'If any man be merry, let him sing psalms.' But St. Bernard, who is also strict in this particular, yet he adds the temper. Though jestings be not fit for

* Lib. de Offic. † In Ep. ad Ephes.

a Christian, *interdum tamen si incidant, ferendæ fortassis, referendæ nunquam: magis interveniendum caute et prudenter nugacitati:* "If they seldom happen, they are to be borne, but never to be returned and made a business of; but we must rather interpose warily and prudently to hinder the growth and progress of the trifle."

But concerning this case of conscience, we are to remember, these holy persons found jesting to be a trade;* such were the *ridicularii* among the Romans, and the γελωτοποιοὶ among the Greeks; and this trade, besides its own unworthiness, was mingled with infinite impieties; and in the institution, and in all the circumstances of its practice, was not only against all prudent severity, but against modesty and chastity, and was a license in disparagement of virtue; and the most excellent things and persons were by it undervalued: so that in this throng of evil circumstances finding a humor placed, which, without infinite wariness, could never pretend to innocence, it is no wonder they forbade all; and so also did St. Paul on the same account. And in the same state of reproof to this day are all that do as they did: such as are professed jesters, people that play the fool for money, whose employment and study is to unclothe themselves of the covers of reason or modesty, that they may be laughed at. And let it be considered, how miserable every sinner is, if he does not deeply and truly repent; and when the man is wet with tears, and covered with sorrow, crying out mightily against his sins, how ugly will it look when this is remembered, the next day, that he plays the fool, and raises his laughter louder than his prayers and yesterday's groans, for no interest but that he may eat! A penitent and a jester is like a Grecian piece of money, on which were stamped a Helena on one side, and a Hecuba on the other, a rose and a deadly aconite, a Paris and an Æsop,—nothing was more contrary; and on this account this folly was reproved by St. Jerome; *Verum et hæc a sanctis viris penitus propellenda, quibus magis convenit flere atque lugere,* "Weeping, and penitential sorrow, and the sweet troubles of pity and compassion, become a holy person"† much better than a scurri-

* Vide S. Chrysost. Homil. 6. in Matth. † Ubi supra.

lous tongue. But the whole state of this question is briefly this.

1. If jesting be unseasonable, it is also intolerable; Γέλως ἄκαιρος ἐν βροτοῖς δεινὸν κακόν.*

2. If it be immoderate, it is criminal, and a little thing here makes the excess; it is so in the confines of folly, that, as soon as it is out of doors, it is in the regions of sin.

3. If it be in an ordinary person, it is dangerous; but if in an eminent, a consecrated, a wise, and extraordinary person, it is scandalous. *Inter sæculares nugæ sunt, in ore sacerdotis blasphemiæ*, so St. Bernard.

4. If the matter be not of an indifferent nature, it becomes sinful by giving countenance to a vice, or making virtue to become ridiculous.

5. If it be not watched that it complies with all that hear, it becomes offensive and injurious..

6. If it be not intended to fair and lawful purposes, it is sour in the using.

7. If it be frequent, it combines and clusters into a formal sin.

8. If it mingles with any sin, it puts on the nature of that new unworthiness, beside the proper ugliness of the thing itself; and, after all these, when can it be lawful or apt for Christian entertainment?

The Ecclesiastical History reports, that many jests passed between St. Anthony, the father of the hermits, and his scholar, St. Paul; and St. Hilarion is reported to have been very pleasant, and of facete, sweet, and more lively conversation; and, indeed, plaisance, and joy, and a lively spirit, and a pleasant conversation, and the innocent caresses of a charitable humanity, is not forbidden; *Plenum tamen suavitatis et gratiæ sermonem non esse indecorum*, St. Ambrose affirmed; and here in my text our conversation is commanded to be such, ἵνα δῷ χάριν, 'that it may minister grace,' that is, favor, complaisance, cheerfulness; and be acceptable and pleasant to the hearer: and so must be our conversation; it must be as far from sullenness as it ought to be from lightness, and a cheerful spirit is the best

* Wint. Min. P. γνῶμ. γ. β.

convoy for religion; and though sadness does in some cases become a Christian, as being an index of a pious mind, of compassion, and a wise, proper resentment of things, yet it serves but one end, being useful in the only instance of repentance; and hath done its greatest works, not when it weeps and sighs, but when it hates and grows careful against sin. But cheerfulness and a festival spirit fill the soul full of harmony, it composes music for churches and hearts, it makes and publishes glorifications of God, it produces thankfulness, and serves the end of charity: and when the oil of gladness runs over, it makes bright and tall emissions of light and holy fires, reaching up to a cloud, and making joy round about: and therefore, since it is so innocent, and may be so pious and full of holy advantage, whatsoever can innocently minister to this holy joy, does set forward the work of religion and charity. And, indeed, charity itself, which is the vertical top of all religion, is nothing else but a union of joys, concentred in the heart, and reflected from all the angles of our life and intercourse. It is a rejoicing in God, a gladness in our neighbor's good, a pleasure in doing good, a rejoicing with him; and without love we cannot have any joy at all. It is this that makes children to be a pleasure, and friendship to be so noble and divine a thing; and on this account it is certain, that all that which can innocently make a man cheerful, does also make him charitable; for grief, and age, and sickness, and weariness, these are peevish and troublesome: but mirth and cheerfulness are content, and civil, and compliant, and communicative, and love to do good, and swell up to felicity only on the wings of charity. On this account, here is pleasure enough for a Christian at present; and if a facete discourse, and an amicable friendly mirth, can refresh the spirit, and take it off from the vile temptation of peevish, despairing, uncomplying melancholy, it must needs be innocent and commendable. And we may as well be refreshed by a clean and a brisk discourse, as by the air of Campanian wines; and our faces and our heads may as well be anointed and look pleasant with wit and friendly intercourse, as with the fat of the balsam tree; and such a conversation no wise man ever did or ought to reprove. But when the jest hath teeth and nails, biting or scratching our brother,—when it is loose and wanton,

—when it is unseasonable,—and much, or many,—when it serves ill purposes, or spends better time; then it is the drunkenness of the soul, and makes the spirit fly away, seeking for a temple where the mirth and the music are solemn and religious.

But, above all the abuses which ever dishonored the tongues of men, nothing more deserves the whip of an exterminating angel, or the stings of scorpions, than profane jesting: which is a bringing of the Spirit of God to partake of the follies of a man; as if it were not enough for a man to be a fool, but the wisdom of God must be brought into those horrible scenes: he that makes a jest of the words of Scripture, or of holy things, plays with thunder, and kisses the mouth of a cannon just as it belches fire and death; he stakes heaven at spurn-point, and trips cross and pile whether ever he shall see the face of God or no; he laughs at damnation, while he had rather lose God than lose his jest; nay (which is the horror of all), he makes a jest of God himself, and the Spirit of the Father and the Son to become ridiculous. Some men use to read Scripture on their knees, and many with their heads uncovered, and all good men with fear and trembling, with reverence and grave attention. 'Search the Scriptures, for therein ye hope to have life eternal;' and, 'All Scripture is written by inspiration of God, and is fit for instruction, for reproof, for exhortation, for doctrine,' not for jesting; but he that makes that use of it, had better part with his eyes in jest, and give his heart to make a tennis-ball; and, that I may speak the worst thing in the world of it, it is as like the material part of the sin against the Holy Ghost, as jeering of a man is to abusing him; and no man can use it but he that wants wit and manners, as well as he wants religion.

3. The third instance of vain, trifling conversation and immoderate talking, is, revealing secrets; which is a dismantling and rending of the robe from the privacies of human intercourse; and it is worse than denying to restore that which was intrusted to our charge; for this not only injures his neighbor's right, but throws it away, and exposes it to his enemy; it is a denying to give a man his own arms, and delivering them to another, by whom he shall suffer mischief. He that intrusts a secret to his friend, goes thither as to a sanctuary, and to violate the rites of

that is sacrilege, and profanation of friendship, which is the sister of religion, and the mother of secular blessing; a thing so sacred, that it changes a kingdom into a church, and makes interest to be piety, and justice to become religion. But this mischief grows according to the subject-matter and its effect; and the tongue of a babbler may crush a man's bones, or break his fortune on her own wheel: and whatever the effect be, yet of itself it is the betraying of a trust, and, by reproach, oftentimes passes on to intolerable calamities, like a criminal to his scaffold through the execrable gates of cities; and, though it is infinitely worse that the secret is laid open out of spite or treachery, yet it is more foolish when it is discovered for no other end but to serve the itch of talking, or to seem to know, or to be accounted worthy of a trust; for so some men open their cabinets, to show only that a treasure is laid up, and that themselves were valued by their friend, when they were thought capable of a secret; but they shall be so no more; for he that by that means goes in pursuit of reputation, loses the substance by snatching at the shadow, and, by desiring to be thought worthy of a secret, proves himself unworthy of friendship or society. Davila tells of a French marquis, young and fond, to whom the duke of Guise had conveyed notice of the intended massacre; which when he had whispered into the king's ear where there was no danger of publication, but only would seem a person worthy of such a trust, he was instantly murdered, lest a vanity like that might unlock so horrid a mystery.

I have nothing more to add concerning this, but that if this vanity happens in the matters of religion, it puts on some new circumstances of deformity: and if he, that ministers to the souls of men, and is appointed to 'restore him that is overtaken in a fault,' shall publish the secrets of a conscience, he prevaricates the bands of nature and religion; instead of a father, he turns 'an accuser,' a διάβολος, he weakens the hearts of the penitent, and drives the repenting man from his remedy by making it to be intolerable; and so religion becomes a scandal, and his duty is made his disgrace, and Christ's yoke does bow his head unto the ground, and the secrets of the Spirit pass into the flames of the world, and all the sweetnesses by which the severity of the duty is alleviated and made easy, are imbit-

tered and become venomous by the tongue of a talking fool. Valerius Soranus was put to death by the old and braver Romans, *ob meritum profanæ vocis, quod, contra interdictum, Romæ nomen eloqui fuit ausus;* "because by prating he profaned the secret of their religion, and told abroad that name of the city" which the Tuscan rites had commanded to be concealed, lest the enemies of the people should call from them their tutelar gods, which they could not do but by telling the proper relation. And in Christianity, all nations have consented to disgrace that priest who loves the pleasure of a fool's tongue before the charity of souls, and the arts of the Spirit, and the nobleness of the religion; and they have inflicted on him all the censures of the church, which in the capacity of an ecclesiastical person he can suffer.

These I reckon as the proper evils of the vain and trifling tongue; for though the effect passes into further mischief, yet the original is weakness and folly, and all that unworthiness which is not yet arrived at malice. But hither also, on the same account, some other irregularities of speech are reducible, which, although they are of a mixed nature, yet are properly acted by a vain and loose tongue; and therefore here may be considered not improperly.

1. The first is common swearing, against which St. Chrysostom spends twenty homilies: and by the number and weight of arguments hath left this testimony, that it is a foolish vice, but hard to be cured; infinitely unreasonable, but strangely prevailing; almost as much without remedy, as it is without pleasure; for it enters first by folly, and grows by custom, and dwells with carelessness, and is nursed by irreligion, and want of the fear of God; it profanes the most holy things, and mingles dirt with the beams of the sun, follies and trifling talk interweaved and knit together with the sacred name of God; it placeth the most excellent of things in the meanest and basest circumstances, it brings the secrets of heaven into the streets, dead men's bones into the temple; nothing is a greater sacrilege than to prostitute the great name of God to the petulancy of an idle tongue, and blend it as an expletive to fill up the emptiness of a weak discourse. The name of God is so sacred, so mighty, that it rends mountains, it opens the bowels of the

deepest rocks, it casts out devils, and makes hell to tremble, and fills all the regions of heaven with joy; the name of God is our strength and confidence, the object of our worshippings, and the security of all our hopes; and when God had given himself a name, and immured it with dread and reverence, like the garden of Eden with the swords of cherubim, and none durst speak it but he whose lips were hallowed, and that at holy and solemn times, in a most holy and solemn place; I mean the high-priest of the Jews at the solemnities when he entered into the sanctuary,—then he taught all the world the majesty and veneration of his name; and therefore it was that God made restraints on our conceptions and expressions of him: and, as he was infinitely curious, that, from all the appearances he made to them, they should not depict or engrave any image of him; so he took care that even the tongue should be restrained, and not to be too free in forming images and representments of his name; and therefore, as God drew their eyes from vanity, by putting his name amongst them, and representing no shape; so even when he had put his name amongst them, he took it off from the tongue and placed it before the eye; for Jehovah was so written on the priest's mitre, that all might see and read, but none speak it but the priest. But, besides all this, there is one great thing concerning the name of God, beyond all that can be spoken or imagined else; and that is, that when God the Father was pleased to pour forth all his glories, and imprint them on his holy Son in his exaltation, it was by giving him his holy name, the Tetragrammaton, or Jehovah made articulate; to signify 'God manifested in the flesh;' and so he wore the character of God, and became the bright image of his person.

Now all these great things concerning the name of God are infinite reproofs of common and vain swearing by it; God's name is left us here to pray by, to hope in, to be the instrument and conveyance of our worshippings, to be the witness of truth and the judge of secrets, the end of strife and the avenger of perjury, the discerner of right and the severe exacter of all wrongs; and shall all this be unhallowed by impudent talking of God without sense, or fear, or notices, or reverence, or observation?

One thing more I have to add against this vice of a foolish

tongue, and that is, that as much prating fills the discourse with lying, so this trifling swearing changes every trifling lie into a horrid perjury; and this was noted by St. James: 'But above all things, swear not at all,' ἵνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε, 'that ye may not fall into condemnation;'* so we read it, following the Arabian, Syrian, and Latin books, and some Greek copies; and it signifies, that all such swearing, and putting fierce appendages to every word, like great iron bars to a straw basket or the curtains of a tent, is a direct condemnation of ourselves: for while we by much talking regard truth too little, and yet bind up our trifles with so severe a band, we are condemned by our own words; for men are made to expect, what you bound on them by an oath, and account your trifle, to be serious; of which when you fail, you have given sentence against yourself: and this is agreeable to those words of our blessed Saviour, 'Of every idle word you shall give account; for by thy words thou shalt be condemned, and by thy words thou shalt be justified.'† But there is another reading of these words, which hath great emphasis and power, in this article, 'Swear not at all,' ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπόκρισιν πέσητε, 'that you may not fall into hypocrisy,' that is, into the disreputation of a lying, deceiving, cozening person: for he that will put his oath to every common word, makes no great matter of an oath; for in swearing commonly, he must needs sometimes swear without consideration, and therefore without truth; and he that does so in any company, tells the world he makes no great matter of being perjured.

All these things put together may take off our wonder at St. James's expression of πρὸ πάντων, 'above all things swear not:' it is a thing so highly to be regarded, and yet is so little considered, that it is hard to say, whether there be in the world any instance, in which men are so careless of their danger and damnation, as in this.

2. The next appendage of vain and trifling speech is contention, wrangling, and perpetual talk, proceeding from the spirit of contradiction: *Profert enim mores plerumque oratio, et animi secreta detegit. Nec sine causa Græci prodiderunt, Ut*

* chap. v. 12. † Matt. xii. 36.

vivat, quemque etiam dicere, said Quintilian:* "For the most part, a man's words betray his manners, and unlock the secrets of the mind: and it was not without cause that the Greeks said, As a man lives, so he speaks;" for so indeed Menander,† ἀνδρὸς χαρακτὴρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται: and Aristides, οἷος ὁ τρόπος, τοιοῦτος καὶ ὁ λόγος: so that it is a sign of a peevish, an angry, and quarrelling disposition, to be disputative, and busy in questions, and impertinent oppositions.

You shall meet with some men (such were the sceptics, and such were the Academics of old) who will not endure any man shall be of their opinion, and will not suffer men to speak truth, or to consent to their own propositions, but will put every man to fight for his own possessions, disturbing the rest of truth, and all the dwellings of unity and consent: *clamosum altercatorem*, Quintilian calls such a one.‡ This is περίσσευμα καρδίας, "an overflowing of the heart" and of the gall; and it makes men troublesome, and intricates all wise discourses, and throws a cloud on the face of truth; and while men contend for truth, error, dressed in the same habit, slips into her chair, and all the litigants court her for the divine sister of wisdom. *Nimium altercando veritas amittitur:* there is noise but no harmony, fighting but no victory, talking but no learning: all are teachers, and are wilful, every man is angry, and without reason and without charity.

Ἔγχος ἔχων στόμα θοῦρον, ἔπος ξίφος, ἀσπίδα φωνὴν,

"Their mouth is a spear, their language is a two-edged sword, their throat is a shield," as Nonnus's expression is; and the clamors and noises of this folly is that which St. Paul reproves in this chapter; 'Let all bitterness and clamor be put away.' People that contend earnestly, talk loud: *Clamor equus est iræ: cum prostraveris, equitem dejeceris*, saith St. Chrysostom; "Anger rides on noise as on a horse, till the noise and the rider is in the dirt:" and, indeed, so to do is an act of fine strength, and the cleanest spiritual force that can be exercised in this instance; and though it be hard, in the midst of a

* Quint. xi. 1. 30. Gesner. † Winterton. Min. P. γνῶμαι Λ. β.
‡ Quint. vi. 4. 15.

violent motion, instantly to stop, yet by strength and good conduct it may be done. But he whose tongue rides on passion, and is spurred by violence and contention, is like a horse or mule without a bridle, and without understanding, *τῶν δὲ κεκραγότων οὐδεὶς σώφρων ἐστί*: "No person, that is clamorous, can be wise."

These are the vanities and evil fruits of the easy talker; the instances of a trifling impertinent conversation: and yet it is observable, that although the instances in the beginning be only vain, yet in the issue and effects they are troublesome and full of mischief; and, that we may perceive, that even all effusion and multitude of language and vainer talk cannot be innocent, we may observe that there are many good things which are wholly spoiled, if they do but touch the tongue; they are spoiled with speaking: such as is; the sweetest of all Christian graces, humility, and the noblest actions of humanity, the doing favors and acts of kindness. If you speak of them, you pay yourself, and lose your kindness: humility is by talking changed into pride and hypocrisy, and patience passes into peevishness, and secret trust into perfidiousness, and modesty into dissolution, and judgment into censure; but by silence, and a restrained tongue, all the first mischiefs are avoided, and all these graces preserved.

SERMON IX.

OF SLANDER AND FLATTERY.

PART III.

He that is twice asked a question, and then answers, is to be excused if he answers weakly: but he that speaks before he be asked, had need take care he speak wisely; for if he does

not, he hath no excuse; and, if he does, yet it loses half its beauty; and therefore, the old man gave good counsel in the comedy to the boy, ὦ παῖ, σιώπα, πόλλ' ἔχει σιγὴ καλά:* the profits of a restrained modest tongue cannot easily be numbered, any more than the evils of an unbridled and dissolute. But they were but infant mischiefs, which, for the most part, we have already observed, as the issues of vain and idle talking; but there are two spirits worse than these; 1. the spirit of detraction; and 2. the spirit of flattery. The first is διαβολὴ, from whence the devil hath his name; he is 'an accuser' of the brethren. But the second is worse; it is θανατηφόρος or θανάσιμος 'damnable' and 'deadly;' it is the nurse of vice, and the poison of the soul. These are σαπροὶ λόγοι, 'sour' and 'filthy communications;' the first is rude, but the latter is most mischievous; and both of them to be avoided like death, or the despairing murmurs of the damned.

1. Let no calumny, no slandering, detracting communication proceed out of your mouth: the first sort of this is that which the Apostle calls whispering, which signifies to abuse our neighbor secretly, by telling a private story of him:

——— linguaque refert audita susurra;†

for here the man plays a sure game, as he supposes, a mischief without a witness,

Φιλολοιδόροιο γλώσσης
Φεύγω βέλεμνα κοῦφα,

as Anacreon calls them;‡ "the light, swift arrows of a calumniating tongue;" they pierce into the heart and bowels of the man speedily. These are those which the Holy Scripture notes by the disgraceful name of 'tale-bearers;' 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among the people;'§ for 'there are six things which God hates,' saith Solomon; 'yea, the seventh is an abomination unto him;'‖ it is βδέλυγμα, as bad, and as much hated by God, as an idol, and that is, 'a whisperer,' or 'tale-bearer that soweth contention amongst

* Menander, Clerc, p. 220. † Ovid. Met. vii. 825.
‡ Od. xlii. 11. § Levit. xix. 6. ‖ Prov. vi. 17.

brethren.'* This kind of communication was called συκοφαντία among the Greeks, and was as much hated as the publicans among the Jews: πονηρὸν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πονηρὸν συκοφάντης, "It is a vile thing, O ye Athenians, it is a vile thing for a man to be a sycophant, or a tale-bearer:" and the dearest friendships in the world cannot be secure, where such whisperers are attended to.

> Te fingente nefas, Pyladen odisset Orestes,
> Thesea Pirithoi destituisset amor.
> Tu Siculos fratres, et majus nomen Atridas,
> Et Ledæ poteras dissociare genus.†

But this crime is a conjugation of evils, and is productive of infinite mischiefs; it undermines peace, and saps the foundation of friendship; it destroys families, and rends in pieces the very heart and vital parts of charity; it makes an evil man, party, and witness, and judge, and executioner of the innocent, who is hurt though he deserved it not;

> Et, si non aliqua nocuisses, mortuus esses.‡

And no man's interest or reputation, no man's peace or safety, can abide, where this nurse of jealousy, and parent of contention, like the earwig, creeps in at the ear, and makes a diseased noise, and a scandalous murmur.

2. But such tongues as these, where they dare, and where they can safely, love to speak louder, and then it is detraction; when men, under the color of friendship, will certainly wound the reputation of a man, while, by speaking some things of him fairly, he shall without suspicion be believed when he speaks evil of him; such was he that Horace speaks of, *Me Capitolinus convictore usus amicoque*, &c. "Capitolinus is my friend, and we have long lived together, and obliged each other by mutual endearments, and I am glad he is acquitted by the criminal judges;"

> Sed tamen admiror, quo pacto judicium illud
> Fugerit:

"Yet I confess, I wonder how he should escape; but will say

* Prov. xxvi. 20. † Martial, vii. 24. ‡ Virg. Buc. iii. 15.

no more, because he is my friend."* Καινὸς γὰρ ἔτι τις οὗτος εὕρηται τρόπος διαβολῆς, τὸ μὴ ψέγοντας ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας λυμαίνεσθαι, says Polybius; "This is a new way of accusation, to destroy a man by praises." These men strike obliquely, like a wild swine, or the οἱ ἐν νεύροις βόες, ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων ἔχουσι τὰ κέρατα, "like bulls in a yoke, they have horns on their necks," and do you a mischief when they plough your ground; and, as Joab slew Abner, he took him by the beard and kissed him, and smote him under the fifth rib, that he died; so doth the detracting tongue, like the smooth-tongued lightning, it will break your bones when it kisses the flesh: so Syphax did secretly wound Masinissa, and made Scipio watchful and implacable against Sophonisba, only by commending her beauty and her wit, her constancy and unalterable love to her country, and by telling how much himself was forced to break his faith by the tyranny of her prevailing charms. This is that which the Apostle calls πονηρίαν, 'a crafty and deceitful way of hurting,' and renders a man's tongue venomous as the tongue of a serpent, that bites even though he be charmed.

3. But the next is more violent, and that is railing or reviling; which Aristotle, in his Rhetorics, says, is very often the vice of boys and of rich men, who, out of folly or pride, want of manners, or want of the measures of a man, wisdom, and the just proportions of his brethren,—do use those that err before them, most scornfully and unworthily: and Tacitus noted it of the Claudian family in Rome, an old and inbred pride and scornfulness made them apt to abuse all that fell under their power and displeasure; *Quorum superbiam frustra per obsequium et modestiam effugeres.*† No observance, or prudence, no modesty, can escape the reproaches of such insolent and high talkers. A. Gellius tells of a boy that would give every one that he met a box on the ear; and some men will give foul words, having a tongue rough as a cat, and biting like an adder; and all their reproofs are direct scoldings, their common intercourse is open contumely. There have been, in these last ages, examples of judges, who would reproach the condemned and miserable criminal, deriding his calamity, and

* Hor Sat. i. 4. 100. † Agric. c. 30.

reviling his person. Nero did so to Thraseas; and the old heathens to the primitive martyrs; *perеuntibus addita ludibria*, said Tacitus of them;* they crucified them again, by putting them to suffer the shame of their fouler language: they railed at them, when they bowed their heads on the cross, and groaned forth the saddest accents of approaching death. This is that evil that possessed those of whom the Psalmist speaks: 'Our tongues are our own; we are they that ought to speak: who is Lord over us?' that is, our tongues cannot be restrained: and St. James said something of this, 'The tongue is an unruly member, which no man can tame:'† that is, no private person, but a public way: for he that can rule the tongue, is fit also to rule the whole body, that is, the church or congregation: magistrates and the governors of souls, they are by severity to restrain this inordination, which indeed is a foul one;

Ὡς ἄρα οὐδέν τι διαβόλου γλώττης χείρων ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἕτερον κακόν.

"No evil is worse, or of more open violence to the rest and reputation of men, than a reproachful tongue." And it were well if we considered this evil, to avoid it in those instances by which our conversation is daily stained. Are we not often too imperious against our servants? Do we not entertain and feed our own anger with vile and basest language? Do not we chastise a servant's folly or mistake, his error or his chance, with language fit to be used by none but vile persons, and towards none but dogs? Our blessed Saviour, restraining the hostility and murder of the tongue, threatens hell-fire to them that call their brother 'fool;' meaning that all language which does really, and by intention, disgrace him in the greater instances, is as directly against the charity of the gospel, as killing a man was against the severity and justice of the law. And although the word itself may be used to reprove the indiscretions and careless follies of an idle person; yet it must be used only in order to his amendment,—by an authorised person,—in the limits of a just reproof,—on just occasion,—and so as may not do him mischief in the event of things. For so

* Ann. xv. 44. † James iii. 8.

we find that our blessed Saviour called his disciples *ἀνοήτους*, 'foolish;'* and St. James used *ἄνθρωπε κενὲ*, 'vain man,' signifying the same with the forbidden *raca*, *κενὸν*, 'vain, useless, or empty;' and St. Paul calls the Galatians, 'mad, and foolish, and bewitched;' and Christ called Herod, 'fox;' and St. John called the pharisees, 'the generation of vipers;' and all this matter is wholly determined by the manner, and with what mind, it is done: if it be for correction and reproof towards persons that deserve it, and by persons whose authority can warrant a just and severe reproof, and this also be done prudently, safely, and usefully,—it is not contumely; but when men, on all occasions, revile an offending person, lessening his value, souring his spirit and his life, despising his infirmities, tragically expressing his lightest misdemeanor, *οἱ ὑπὸ μικρῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀνυπερβλήτως ὀργιζόμενοι*, "being tyrannically declamatory, and intolerably angry for a trifle;"—these are such, who, as Apollonius the philosopher said, will not suffer the offending person to know when his fault is great, and when it is little. For they who always put on a supreme anger, or express the less anger with the highest reproaches, can do no more to him that steals, than to him that breaks a crystal; *non plus æquo, non diutius æquo*, was a good rule for reprehension of offending servants; but no more anger, no more severe language, than the thing deserves: if you chide too long, your reproof is changed into reproach; if too bitterly, it becomes railing; if too loud, it is immodest; if too public, it is like a dog.

> *Τὸ δ' ἐπιδιώκειν, εἴς τε τὴν ὁδὸν τρέχειν*
> *Ἔτι λοιδορουμένην, κυνός ἐστ' ἔργον, Ῥόδη.*
>
> Menand. Cler. p. 90.

So the man told his wife in the Greek comedy: "To follow me in the streets with thy clamorous tongue, is to do as dogs do," not as persons civil or religious.

4. The fourth instance of the calumniating, filthy communication, is that which we properly call slander, or the inventing evil things, falsely imputing crimes to our neighbor: *Falsum*

* Matt. xxiii. 17. 19. Luke xxiv. 25.

crimen quasi venenatum telum, said Cicero;* "a false tongue or a foul lie against a man's reputation, is like a poisoned arrow," it makes the wound deadly, and every scratch to be incurable. *Promptissima vindicta contumelia*, said one; to reproach and rail, is a revenge that every girl can take. But falsely to accuse, is as spiteful as hell, and deadly as the blood of dragons.

Stoicus occidit Baream, delator amicum.†

This is the direct murder of the tongue, for 'life and death are in the hand of the tongue,' said the Hebrew proverb: and it was esteemed so vile a thing, that when Jezebel commanded the elders of Israel to suborn false witnesses against Naboth, she gave them instructions to 'take two men, the sons of Belial:' none else were fit for the employment.

Quid non audebis, perfida lingua, loqui?‡

This was it that broke Ephraim in judgment, and executed the fierce anger of the Lord on him; God gave him over to be oppressed by a false witness, *quoniam cœpit abire post sordes*, therefore he suffered calumny, and was overthrown in judgment. This was it that humbled Joseph in fetters, and 'the iron entered into his soul;' but it crushed him not so much as the false tongue of his revengeful mistress, 'until his cause was known, and the word of the Lord tried him.' This was it that slew Abimelech, and endangered David; it was a sword *in manu linguæ Doeg*, 'in the hand of Doeg's tongue.' By this, Ziba cut off the legs of Mephibosheth, and made his reputation lame for ever; it thrust Jeremy into the dungeon, and carried Susanna to her stake, and our Lord to his cross; and therefore, against the dangers of a slandering tongue, all laws have so cautiously armed themselves, that, besides the severest prohibitions of God, often recorded in both Testaments, God hath chosen it to be one of his appellatives to be the defender of them, a party for those, whose innocency and defenceless state make them most apt to be undone by this evil spirit; I

* Pro Quir. 8. † Juv. iii. 116. ‡ Mart. vii. 24.

mean pupils and widows, the poor and the oppressed.* And in pursuance of this charity, the imperial laws have invented a *juramentum de calumnia*, or oath to be exhibited to the actor or plaintiff, that he believes himself to have a just cause, and that he does not implead his adversary *calumniandi animo*, "with false instances," and indefensible allegations; and the defendant is to swear, that he thinks himself to use only just defences, and perfect instances of resisting; and both of them obliged themselves, that they would exact no proof but what was necessary to the truth of the cause. And all this defence was nothing but necessary guards; for, 'a spear, and a sword, and an arrow, is a man that speaketh false witness against his neighbor.' And, therefore, the laws of God added yet another bar against this evil, and the false accuser was to suffer the punishment of the objected crime: and, as if this were not sufficient, God hath in several ages wrought miracles, and raised the dead to life, that, by such strange appearances, they might relieve the oppressed innocent, and load the false accusing tongue with shame and horrible confusion. So it happened in the case of Susanna: the spirit of a man was put into the heart of a child to acquit the virtuous woman; and so it was in the case of Gregory, bishop of Agrigentum, falsely accused by Sabinus and Crescentius; God's power cast the devil out of Eudocia, the devil, or spirit of slander, and compelled her to speak the truth. St. Austin, in his book, *De Cura pro Mortuis*, tells of a dead father that appeared to his oppressed son, and, in a great matter of law, delivered him from the teeth of false accusation.† So was the church of Monts rescued by the appearance of Aia, the deceased wife of Hidulphus, their earl, as it appears in the Hanovian story; and the Polonian Chronicles tell the like of Stanislaus, bishop of Cracovia, almost oppressed by the anger and calumny of Boleslaus their king; God relieved him by the testimony of St. Peter, their bishop, or a phantasm like him. But, whether these records may be credited or no, I contend not; yet it is very material which Eusebius relates of the three false witnesses accusing Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, of an infamous crime, which they did, affirming it under several curses:‡ the first wishing,

* Levit. vi. Zech. vii. Luke iii. † cap. 11. ‡ lib. vi. cap. 7

that if he said false, God would destroy him with fire; the second, that he might die of the king's evil; the third, that he might be blind: and so it came to pass; the first, being surprised with fire in his own roof, amazed and intricated, confounded and despairing, paid the price of his slander with the pains of most fearful flames: and the second perished by pieces, and chirurgeons, and torment: which when the third saw, he repented of his fault, cried mightily for pardon, but wept so bitterly, and found at the same time the reward of his calumny, and the acceptation of his repentance: *κακουργότερον οὐδὲν διαβολῆς ἐστί πω*, said Cleanthes: "Nothing is more operative of spiteful and malicious purposes, than the calumniating tongue." In the temple at Smyrna, there were looking-glasses which represented the best face as crooked, ugly, and deformed; the Greeks call these *ἑτερόσχημα* and *παράχροα*: and so is every false tongue; it lies in the face of heaven, and abuses the ears of justice; it oppresses the innocent, and is secretly revenged of virtue; it defeats all the charity of laws, and arms the supreme power, and makes it strike the innocent; it makes frequent appeals to be made to heaven, and causes an oath, instead of being the end of strife, to be the beginning of mischief; it calls the name and testimony of God to seal an injury; it feeds and nourishes cruel anger, but mocks justice, and makes mercy weep herself into pity, and mourn because she cannot help the innocent.

5. The last instance of this evil I shall now represent, is cursing, concerning which I have this only to say; that although the causeless curse shall return on the tongue that spake it, yet, because very often there is a fault on both sides, when there is reviling or cursing on either, the danger of a cursing tongue is highly to be declined, as the biting of a mad dog, or the tongue of a smitten serpent. For, as envy is in the evil eye, so is cursing in the reproachful tongue; it is a kind of venom and witchcraft, an instrument by which God oftentimes punishes anger and uncharitableness; and by which the devil gets power over the bodies and interests of men: for he that works by Thessalic ceremonies, by charms and nonsense words, by figures and insignificant characterisms, by images and by rags, by circles and imperfect noises, hath more advan-

tage and real title to the opportunities of mischief, by the cursing tongue; and though God is infinitely more ready to do acts of kindness than of punishment, yet God is not so careless a regarder of the violent and passionate wishes of men, but he gives some over to punishment, and chastises the follies of rage, and the madness of the tongue, by suffering it to pass into a farther mischief than the harsh sound and horrible accents of the evil language. 'By the tongue we bless God and curse men,' saith St. James; λοιδορία is κατάρα, 'reproaching is cursing,' and both of them opposed to εὐλογία, to 'blessing;' and there are many times and seasons in which both of them pass into real effect. These are the particulars of the second.

III. I am now to instance in the third sort of filthy communication, that in which the devil does the most mischief; by which he undoes souls; by which he is worse than διάβολος, 'an accuser:' for though he accuses maliciously, and instances spitefully, and heaps objections diligently, and aggravates bitterly, and, with all his power endeavors to represent the separate souls to God as polluted and unfit to come into his presence, yet this malice is ineffective, because the scenes are acted before the wise Judge of men and angels, who cannot be abused; before our Father, and our Lord, who knows whereof we be made, and remembereth that we are but dust; before our Saviour, and our elder brother, who hath felt our infirmities, and knows how to pity, to excuse, and to answer for us: but though this accusation of us cannot hurt them who will not hurt themselves, yet this malice is prevailing when the spirit of flattery is let forth on us. This is the ἀπολλύων, 'the destroyer,' and is the most contrary thing to charity in the whole world: and St. Paul noted it in his character of charity, Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται, 'Charity vaunteth not itself;'* so we translate it, but certainly not exactly, for it signifieth 'easiness,' complying foolishly, and flattering; 'charity flattereth not;' Τί ἐστι τὸ περπερεύεσθαι; πᾶν ὃ μὴ διὰ χρείαν, ἀλλὰ διὰ καλλωπισμὸν παραλαμβάνεται, saith Suidas, out of St. Basil; "It signifieth any thing that serves rather for ornament than for use," for pleasure than for profit.

* 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

Et eo plectuntur poetæ quam suo vitio sæpius,
Ductabilitate nimia vestra aut perperitudine;

saith the comedy; "The poets suffer more by your easiness and flattery, than by their own fault."—And this is it which St. Paul says is against charity. For if to call a man 'fool and vicious,' be so high an injury, we may thence esteem what a great calamity it is to be so; and therefore, he that makes him so, or takes a course he shall not become other, is the vilest enemy to his person and his felicity: and this is the mischief that is done by flattery; it is a design against the wisdom, against the repentance, against the growth and promotion of a man's soul. He that persuades an ugly, deformed man, that he is handsome,—a short man that he is tall,—a bald man that he hath a good head of hair,—makes him to become ridiculous and a fool, but does no other mischief. But he that persuades his friend, that is a goat in his manners, that he is a holy and a chaste person,—or that his looseness is a sign of a quick spirit, —or that it is not dangerous, but easily pardonable,—a trick of youth, a habit that old age will lay aside as a man that pares his nails,—this man hath given great advantage to his friend's mischief; he hath made it grow in all the dimensions of the sin, till it grows intolerable, and perhaps unpardonable. And let it be considered; what a fearful destruction and contradiction of friendship or service it is, so to love myself and my little interest, as to prefer it before the soul of him whom I ought to love! By my flattery I lay a snare to get twenty pounds; and rather than lose this contemptible sum of money, I will throw him that shall give it me (as far as I can) into hell, there to roar beyond all the measures of time or patience. Can any hatred be more, or love be less, can any expression of spite be greater, than that it be said, "You will not part with twenty pounds to save your friend's, or your patron's, or your brother's soul?" and so it is with him that invites him to, or confirms him in, his folly, in hopes of getting something from him; he will see him die, and die eternally, and help forward that damnation, so he may get that little by it. Every state is set in the midst of danger, as all trees are set in the wind, but the tallest endure the greatest violence of tempest: no man flatters

a beggar; if he does a slovenly and a rude crime, it is entertained with ruder language, and the mean man may possibly be affrighted from his fault, while it is made so uneasy to him by the scorn and harsh reproaches of the mighty. But princes and nobles often die with this disease; and when the courtiers of Alexander counterfeited his wry neck, and the servants of the Sicilian tyrant pretended themselves dim-sighted, and on purpose rushed one against another, and overthrew the meat as it was served to his table, only because the prince was short-sighted, they gave them sufficient instances in what state of affairs they stood with them that waited; it was certain they would commend every foolish answer, and pretend subtilty in every absurd question, and make a petition that their base actions might pass into a law, and be made to be the honor and sanctity of all the people: and what proportions or ways can such great personages have towards felicity, when their vice shall be allowed and praised, every action that is but tolerable shall be accounted heroical, and if it be intolerable among the wise, it shall be called virtuous among the flatterers? Carneades said bitterly, but it had in it too many degrees of truth, That princes and great personages never learn to do any thing perfectly well, but to ride the great horse, *quia scilicet ferociens bestia adulari non didicit*, "because the proud beast knows not how to flatter," but will as soon throw him off from his back, as he will shake off the son of a porter. But a flatterer is like a neighing horse, that neigheth under every rider, and is pleased with every thing, and commends all that he sees, and tempts to mischief, and cares not, so his friend may but perish pleasantly. And, indeed, that is a calamity that undoes many a soul; we so love our peace, and sit so easily on our own good opinions, and are so apt to flatter ourselves, and lean on our own false supports, that we cannot endure to be disturbed or awakened from our pleasing lethargy. For we care not to be safe, but to be secure; not to escape hell, but to live pleasantly; we are not solicitous of the event, but of the way thither; and it is sufficient, if we be persuaded all is well: in the mean time, we are careless whether indeed it be so or no, and therefore we give pensions to fools and vile persons to abuse

us, and cozen us of felicity. But this evil puts on several shapes, which we must discover, that they may not cozen us without our observation; for all men are not capable of an open flattery: and therefore, some will dress their hypocrisy and illusion so, that you may feel the pleasure, and but secretly the compliance and tenderness to serve the ends of your folly. *Perit procari, si latet*, said Plancus, "If you be not perceived, you lose your reward; if you be too open, you lose it worse."

1. Some flatter by giving great names, and propounding great examples; and thus the Egyptian villains hung a tumbler's rope on their prince, and a piper's whistle; because they called their Ptolemy by the name of Apollo, their god of music. This put buskins on Nero, and made him fiddle in all the great towns of Greece. When their lords were drunkards, they called them Bacchus; when they were wrestlers, they saluted them by the name of Hercules; and some were so vain, as to think themselves commended, when their flatterers told aloud that they had drunk more than Alexander the conqueror. And indeed nothing more abuses easy fools, that only seek for an excuse for their wickedness, a patron for their vice, a warrant for their sleepy peace,—than to tell stories of great examples remarked for the instances of their temptation. When old Cato commended meretricious mixtures, and, to prevent adulteries, permitted fornication, the youth of the succeeding ages had warrant enough to go *ad olentes fornices*, into their chambers of filthy pleasure;

> Quidam notus homo cum exiret fornice; Macte
> Virtute esto, inquit sententia dia Catonis:*

And it would pass the goblets in a freer circle, if a flattering man shall but say, *Narratur et prisci Catonis Sæpe mero caluisse virtus*, "That old Cato would drink hard at sunset."† When Varro had noted, that wise and severe Sallust, who, by excellent sententious words, had reproved the follies of lust, was himself taken in adultery; the Roman youth did hug their vice, and thought it grew on their nature like a man's beard,

* Hor. Sat. i. 2. 31. † Hor. Od. iii. 21. 11.

and that the wisest men would lay their heads on that threshold; and Seneca tells, that the women of that age despised adultery of one man only; and hated it like marriage, and despised that as want of breeding and grandeur of spirit; because the braver Spartans did use to breed their children promiscuously, as the herdsmen do cattle from the fairest bulls. And Arrianus tells that the women would defend their baseness by the doctrine of Plato, who maintained the community of women. This sort of flattery is therefore more dangerous, because it makes the temptation ready for mischief, apted and dressed with proper, material, and imitable circumstances. The way of discourse is far about, but evil examples kill quickly.

2. Others flatter by imitation: for when a crime is rare and insolent, singular and out of fashion, it must be a great strength of malice and impudence that must entertain it; but the flattering man doing the vice of his lord takes off the wonder, and the fear of being stared at; and so encourages it by making it popular and common. Plutarch tells of one that divorced himself from his wife, because his friend did so, that the other might be hardened in the mischief; and when Plato saw his scholars stoop in the shoulders, and Aristotle observed his to stammer, they began to be less troubled with those imperfections, which they thought common to themselves and others.

3. Some pretend rusticity and downright plainness, and on the confidence of that, humor their friend's vice, and flatter his ruin. Seneca observed it of some of his time; *Alius quadam adulatione clam utebatur parce, alius ex aperto palam, rusticitate simulata, quasi simplicitas illa ars non sit.* They pretend they love not to dissemble, and therefore they cannot hide their thoughts; let their friend take it how he will, they must commend that which is commendable; and so, man, that is willing to die quietly, is content with the honest-heartiness and downright simplicity of him, that with an artificial rudeness dressed the flattery.

4. Some will dispraise themselves, that their friend may think better of himself, or less severely of his fault.

5. Others will reprove their friend for a trifle, but with a purpose to let him understand that this is all; for the honest man would have told his friend if it had been worse.

6. Some will laugh and make a sport of a vice, and can hear their friend tell the cursed narrative of his adultery, of his drunkenness, of his craft and unjust purchases; and all this shall prove but a merry scene; as if damnation were a thing to be laughed at, and the everlasting ruin of his friend were a very good jest. But thus the poor sinner shall not be affrighted from his danger, nor chastised by severe language; but the villain that eats his meat, shall take him by the hand, and dance about the pit till he falls in, and dies with shame and folly. Thus the evil spirit puts on shapes enough; none to affright the man, but all to destroy him; and yet it is filthy enough, when it is invested with its own character.

Γαστὴρ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα, πανταχῇ βλέπων
Ὀφθαλμὸς, ἕρπων τοῖς ὀδοῦσι θήριον.

"The parasite or flatterer is a beast that is all belly, looking round with his eye, watchful, ugly, and deceitful, and creeping on his teeth;" they feed him, and he kills them that reach him bread; for that is the nature of all vipers.

I have this one thing only to insert, and then the caution will be sufficient; namely, that we do not think all praise given to our friend to be flattery, though it be in his presence. For sometimes praise is the best conveyance for a precept, and it may nourish up an infant virtue, and make it grow up towards perfection, and its proper measures and rewards. Friendship does better please our friend than flattery; and though it was made also for virtue, yet it mingles pleasures in the chalice: *Εἰς ὄμματ' εὔνου φωτὸς ἐσβλέψαι γλυκύ·* "It is delicious to behold the face of a friendly and a sweet person:"* and it is not the office of a friend always to be sour, or at any time morose; but free, open, and ingenuous, candid and humane, not denying to please, but ever refusing to abuse or corrupt. For as adulterine metals retain the lustre and color of gold, but not the value; so flattery, in imitation of friendship, takes the face and outside of it, the delicious part; but the flatterer uses it to the interests of vice, and a friend by it serves virtue; and therefore, Plutarch well compared friendship to medicinal ointments,

* Eurip. Ion, 732. Hulseman, p. 107.

which however delicious they be, yet they are also useful, and minister to healing: but flattery is sweet and adulterate, pleasant, but without health. He, therefore, that justly commends his friend to promote and encourage his virtue, reconciles virtue with his friend's affection, and makes it pleasant to be good; and he that does so, shall also better be suffered when he reproves, because the needing person shall find, that then is the opportunity and season of it, since he denied not to please so long as he could also profit. I only add this advice; that since self-love is the serpent's milk that feeds this viper, flattery,—we should do well to choke it with its mother's milk; I mean, learn to love ourselves more, for then we should never endure to be flattered. For he that, because he loves himself, loves to be flattered, does, because he loves himself, love to entertain a man to abuse him, to mock him, and to destroy him finally. But he that loves himself truly, will suffer fire, will endure to be burnt, so he may be purified; put to pain, so he may be restored to health; for, "of all sauces," said Evenus, sharpness, severity, and "fire, are the best."

SERMON IX.

THE DUTIES OF THE TONGUE.

PART IV.

Loquendi magistros habemus homines, tacendi Deos, said one; "Men teach us to speak, and God teaches us to hold our tongue." The first we are taught by the lectures of our schools; the latter, by the mysteries of the temple. But now, in the new institution, we have also a great master of speaking; and though silence is one of the great paths of innocence, yet holy speaking is the instrument of spiritual charity, and is a glorifi-

cation of God; and therefore, this kind of speaking is a degree of perfection beyond the wisdom and severity of silence. For, although garrulity and foolish inordinate talking are a conjunction of folly and sin, and the prating man, while he desires to get the love of them he converses with, incurs their hatred; while he would be admired, is laughed at; he spends much and gets nothing; he wrongs his friends, and makes sport to his enemies, and injures himself; he is derided when he tells what others know; he is endangered if he tells a secret and what they know not; he is not believed when he tells good news, and when he tells ill news he is odious; and therefore, that silence, which is a cure of all this evil, is an excellent portion of safety and religion;—yet it is with holy speaking and innocent silence as it is with a hermit and a bishop; the first goes to a good school, but the second is proceeded towards greater perfection; and therefore, the practical life of ecclesiastical governors, being found in the way of holiness and zeal, is called *status perfectionis:* a more excellent and perfect condition of life, and far beyond the retirements and inoffensive life of those innocent persons, which do so much less of profit, by how much charity is better than meditation, and going to heaven by religion and charity, by serving God and converting souls, is better than going to heaven by prayers and secret thoughts: so it is with silence and religious communication: that does not offend God, this glorifies him; that prevents sin, this sets forward the interests of religion. And therefore Plutarch said well, *Qui generose et regio more instituuntur, primum tacere, deinde loqui discunt:* "To be taught first to be silent, then to speak well and handsomely, is education fit for a prince;" and that is St. Paul's method here: first we are taught how to restrain our tongues, in the foregoing instances; and now we are called to employ them in religion.

We must speak 'that which is good,' ἀγαθόν τι, any thing that may serve the ends of our God and of our neighbor, in the measures of religion and usefulness. But it is here as in all other propositions of religion. To us,—who are in the body, and conducted by material phantasms, and understanding nothing but what we feel, or is conveyed to us by the propor-

tions of what we do or have,—God hath given a religion that is fitted to our condition and constitution. And therefore, when we are commanded to love God, by this love Christ understands obedience; when we are commanded to honor God, it is by singing and reciting his praises, and doing things which cause reputation and honor: and even here, when we are commanded to speak that which is good, it is instanced in such good things which are really profitable, practically useful; and here the measures of God are especially by the proportions of our neighbor: and therefore, though speaking honorable things of God be an employment that does honor to our tongues and voices, yet we must tune and compose even these notes so as may best profit our neighbor; for so it must be λόγος ἀγαθὸς, "good speech," such as is εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, "for the edification of necessity:" the phrase is a Hebraism, where the genitive case of a substantive is put for the adjective; and means, that our speech be apted to necessary edification, or such edification as is needful to every man's particular case; that is, that we so order our communication, that it be apt to instruct the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, to recall the wanderer, to restrain the vicious, to comfort the disconsolate, to speak a word in season to every man's necessity, ἵνα δῷ χάριν, 'that it may minister grace;' something that may please and profit them, according as they shall need; all which I shall reduce to these three heads:

1. To instruct.
2. To comfort.
3. To reprove.

1. Our conversation must be διδακτικὸς, 'apt to teach.' For since all our hopes on our part depend on our obedience to God, and conformity to our Lord Jesus, by whom our endeavors are sanctified and accepted, and our weaknesses are pardoned, and all our obedience relies on, and is encouraged and grounded in faith, and faith is founded naturally and primarily in the understanding,—we may observe, that it is not only reasonably to be expected, but experimentally felt, that, in weak and ignorant understandings, there are no sufficient supports for the vigorousness of a holy life; there being nothing,

or not enough, to warrant and strengthen great resolutions, to reconcile our affections to difficulties, to make us patient of affronts, to receive deeper mortifications and ruder usages, unless where an extraordinary grace supplies the want of ordinary notices, as the Apostles were enabled to their preaching: he therefore that carries and imports into the understanding of his brother, notices of faith, incomes of spiritual propositions, and arguments of the Spirit, enables his brother towards the work and practices of a holy life: and though every argument, which the Spirit of God hath made and recorded in Holy Scripture, is of itself inducement great enough to endear obedience; yet it is not so in the event of things to every man's infirmity and need: but in the treasures of the Spirit, in the heaps and variety of institution and wise discourses, there will not only be enough to make a man without excuse, but sufficient to do his work, and to cure his evil, and to fortify his weaker parts, and to comply with his necessities: for although God's sufficient grace is present to all that can use it, yet, if there be no more than that, it is a sad consideration to remember, that there are but few that will be saved, if they be helped but with just so much as can possibly do the work; and this we may well be assured of, if we consider that God is never wanting to any man in what is simply necessary: but then, if we add this also, that of the vast numbers of men, who might possibly be saved, so few really are so, we shall perceive, that that grace which only is sufficient, is not sufficient; sufficient to the thing, is not sufficient for the person; and therefore, that God does usually give us more, and we need more yet; and unless God 'works in us to will and to do,' we shall neither 'will' nor 'do;' though to will be in the power of our hand, yet we will not will; it follows from hence, that all they, who will comply with God's method of graciousness, and the necessities of their brethren, must endeavor, by all means, and in all their own measures and capacities, to lay up treasures of notices and instructions in their brother's soul, that, by some argument or other, they may be met withal, and taken in every corner of their conversation. Add to this, that the duty of a man hath great variety, and the souls of men are infinitely

abused, and the persuasions of men are strangely divided, and the interests of men are a violent and preternatural declination from the strictnesses of virtue, and the resolutions of men are quickly altered, and very hardly to be secured, and the cases of conscience are numerous and intricate, and every state of life hath its proper prejudice, and our notices are abused by our affections, and we shall perceive that men generally need knowlege enough to overpower all their passions, to root out their vicious inclinations, to master their prejudice, to answer objections, to resist temptations, to refresh their weariness, to fix their resolutions, and to determine their doubts; and therefore, to see your brother in a state of ignorance, is to see him unfurnished and unprepared to all good works; a person safe no longer than till a temptation comes, and one that cannot be saved but by an absolute, unlimited predestination, a favor of which he hath no promise, no security, no revelation; and although, to do this, God hath appointed a special order of men, the whole ecclesiastical order, whom he feeds at his own charges, and whom men rob at their own peril, yet this doth not disoblige others: for every master of a family is to instruct, or cause his family to be instructed, and catechised; every governor is to instruct his charge, every man his brother, not always in person, but ever by all possible and just provisions. For if the people die for want of knowlege, they who are set over them shall also die for want of charity. Here, therefore, we must remember, that it is the duty of us all, in our several measures and proportions, to instruct those that need it, and whose necessity is made ready for our ministration; and let us tremble to think, what will be the sad account which we shall make, when even our families are not taught in the fundamentals of religion; for how can it be possible for those, who could not account concerning the stories of Christ's life and death, the ministries of their redemption, the foundation of all their hopes, the great argument of all their obediences; how can it be expected that they should ride in triumph over all the evils, which the devil, and the world, and their own follies, daily present to them, in the course of every day's conversation? And it will be an ill return to say, that God will require no

more of them than he hath given them; for suppose that be true in your own sense, yet he will require it of thee, because thou gavest them no more; and, however, it is a formidable danger, and a trifling hope, for any man to put all the hopes of his being saved on the only stock of ignorance; for if his ignorance should never be accounted for, yet it may leave him in that state, in which his evils shall grow great, and his sins may be irremediable.

2. Our conversation must be παράκλητος, 'apt to comfort' the disconsolate; and than this, men in present can feel no greater charity: for, since half the duty of a Christian in this life consists in the exercise of passive graces; and the infinite variety of Providence, and the perpetual adversity of chances, and the dissatisfaction and emptiness that are in things themselves, and the weariness and anguish of our spirit, do call us to the trial and exercise of patience, even in the days of sunshine, and much more in the violent storms that shake our dwellings, and make our hearts tremble; God hath sent some angels into the world, whose office it is to refresh the sorrows of the poor, and to lighten the eyes of the disconsolate; he hath made some creatures whose powers are chiefly ordained to comfort; wine, and oil, and society, cordials, and variety: and time itself is checkered with black and white; stay but till to-morrow, and your present sorrow will be weary, and will lie down to rest. But this is not all. The third person of the holy Trinity is known to us by the name and dignity of the "Holy Ghost, the Comforter," and God glories in the appellative, that he is 'the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;' and therefore, to minister in the office, is to become like God, and to imitate the charities of heaven; and God hath fitted mankind for it: he most needs it, and he feels his brother's wants by his own experience; and God hath given us speech, and the endearments of society, and pleasantness of conversation, and powers of seasonable discourse, arguments to allay the sorrow, by abating our apprehensions and taking out the sting, or telling the periods of comfort, or exciting hope, or urging a precept, and reconciling our affections, and reciting promises, or telling stories of the divine mercy, or changing it into duty, or making the burden less by comparing it with greater, or by proving it

to be less than we deserve, and that it is so intended, and may become the instrument of virtue. And, certain it is, that as nothing can better do it, so there is nothing greater, for which God made our tongues, next to reciting his praises, than to minister comfort to a weary soul. And what greater measure can we have, than that we should bring joy to our brother, who, with his dreary eyes, looks to heaven and round about, and cannot find so much rest as to lay his eyelids close together? than that thy tongue should be tuned with heavenly accents, and make the weary soul to listen for light and ease; and when he perceives that there is such a thing in the world, and in the order of things, as comfort and joy, to begin to break out from the prison of his sorrows, at the door of sighs and tears, and, by little and little, melt into showers and refreshment? This is glory to thy voice, and employment fit for the brightest angel. But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north: and then the waters break from their inclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer: so is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter; he breaks from the despairs of the grave, and the fetters and chains of sorrow: he blesses God, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be comforted; and God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving-songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing, and comforted, and thankful persons. This part of communication does the work of God and of our neighbors, and bears us to heaven in streams of joy made by the overflowings of our brother's comfort. It is a fearful thing to see a man despairing. None knows the sorrow and the intolerable anguish but themselves, and they that are damned; and so are all the loads of a wounded spirit, when the staff of a man's broken fortune bows his head to the ground, and sinks like an osier under the violence of a mighty tempest. But therefore, in proportion to this, I may tell the

excellency of the employment, and the duty of that charity, which bears the dying and languishing soul from the fringes of hell, to the seat of the brightest stars, where God's face shines, and reflects comforts for ever and ever. And though God hath, for this, especially intrusted his ministers and servants of the church, and hath put into their hearts and notices great magazines of promises, and arguments of hope, and arts of the Spirit, yet God does not always send angels on these embassies, but sends a man, *ut sit homo homini Deus*, "that every good man, in his season, may be to his brother in the place of God," to comfort and restore him; and that it may appear, how much it is the duty of us all to minister comfort to our brother, we may remember that the same words and the same arguments do oftentimes more prevail on our spirits, when they are applied by the hand of another, than when they dwell in us, and come from our own discoursings. This is indeed λόγος χρηστὸς and ἀγαθὸς, it is, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, "to the edification of our needs, and the greatest and most holy charity."

3. Our communication must in its just season be ἐλεγκτικός: 'we must reprove' our sinning brother; 'for the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy,' saith Solomon:* we imitate the office of 'the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls,' if we go 'to seek and save that which was lost;' and it is a fearful thing to see a friend go to hell undisturbed, when the arresting him in his horrid progress may possibly make him to return: this is a course that will change our vile itch of judging and censuring others, into an act of charity; it will alter slander into piety, detraction into counsel, revenge into friendly and most useful offices, that the viper's flesh may become Mithridate, and the devil be defeated in his malicious employment of our language. He is a miserable man, whom none dares tell of his faults so plainly that he may understand his danger; and he that is incapable and impatient of reproof, can never become a good friend to any man. For, besides that himself would never admonish his friend when he sins, (and if he would, why should not himself be glad of the same charity?) he is also 'proud, and scorner is his name;' he thinks himself exempt

* Prov. xxvii. 6.

from the condition and failings of men; or, if he does not, he had rather go to hell than be called to his way by an angry sermon, or driven back by the sword of an angel, or endure one blushing, for all his hopes and interests of heaven. It is no shame to be reproved, but to deserve it; but he that deserves it, and will do so still, shall increase his shame into confusion, and bring on himself a sorrow bigger than the calamities of war, and plagues, and hospitals, and poverty. He only is truly wise, and will be certainly happy, that so understands himself and hates his sin, that he will not nurse it, but get to himself a reprover on purpose, whose warrant shall be liberty, whose thanks shall be amendment, whose entertainment shall be obedience; for a flattering word is like a bright sunshine to a sore eye; it increases the trouble, and lessens the sight;

Hæc demum sapiet dictio quæ feriet;

"The severe word of the reproving man is wise and healthful;" but because all times, and all circumstances, and all persons, are not fit for this employment;

——plurima sunt, quæ
Non audent homines pertusa dicere læna;*

"some will not endure that a poor man, or an obliged person, should reprove them;" and themselves are often so unprofitable servants, that they will rather venture their friend's damnation then hazard their own interest; therefore, in the performance of this duty of useful communication, the following measures are fit to be observed.

1. Let not your reproof be public and personal: if it be public, it must be in general; if it be personal, it must be in private; and this is expressly commanded by our blessed Saviour; 'If thy brother offends, tell it him between him and thee;' for if it comes afterward, in case of contumacy, to be declared in public, it passes from fraternal correption to ecclesiastical discipline. When Socrates reproved Plato at a feast, Plato told him, "it had been better he had told him his fault in private; for to speak it publicly is indecency:" Socrates re-

* Juv. v. 130.

plied; "And so it is for you publicly to condemn that indecency." For it is the nature of man to be spiteful when he is shamed, and to esteem that the worst of evils; and therefore, to take impudence and perseverance for its cover, when his shame is naked: and for this indiscretion, Aristomenes, the tutor of Ptolemy, who, before the Corinthian ambassadors reproved the king for sleeping at the solemn audience, profited nothing, but enraged the prince, and was himself forced to drink poison. But this wariness is not always necessary. For, 1. a public and an authorised person may do it publicly, and may name the person as himself shall judge expedient.

——— secuit Lucilius urbem,—
Te, Lupe! te, Muci!—et genuinum fregit in illis.*

Lucilius was a censor of manners, and by his office he had warrant and authority. 2. There are also some cases in which a public reproof is prudent; and that is, when the crime is great, but not understood to be any at all; for then it is instruction and catechism, and lays aside the affront and trouble of reproof. Thus Ignatius the martyr did reprove Trajan sacrificing at the altar in the sight of all the officers of the army; and the Jews were commanded to reprove the Babylonians for idolatry in the land of their captivity:† and if we see a prince, in the confidence of his pride, and carelessness of spirit, and heat of war, spoil a church, or rob God, it is then fit to tell him the danger of sacrilege, if otherwise he cannot well be taught his danger and his duty. 3. There are some circumstances of person, in which, by interpretation, duty, or custom, a leave is indulged or presumed, that liberty may be prudently used, publicly to reprove the public vices: so it was in the old days of the Romans; vice had then so little footing and authority, so few friends and advocates, that the prophets and poets used a bolder liberty to disgrace whatsoever was amiss;

——— unde illa priorum
Scribendi quodcunque animo flagrante liberet
Simplicitas.‡

And much of the same liberty is still reserved to pulpits, and

* Persius i. 114. † Jer. x. 11. ‡ Juv. i. 151.

to the bishop's office; save only, that although they may reprove publicly, yet they may not often do it personally.

2. Use not to reprove thy brother for every thing, but for great things only:—for this is the office of a tutor, not of a friend; and few men will suffer themselves to abide always under pupillage. When the friend of Philotimus, the physician, came to him to be cured of a sore finger, he told him, *Heus tu, non tibi cum reduvia est negotium!* he let his finger alone, and told him "that his liver was imposthumate:" and he that tells his friend that his countenance is not grave enough in the church, when it may be the man is an atheist, offers him a cure that will do him no good; and to chastise a trifle is not a worthy price of that noblest liberty and ingenuity, which becomes him that is to heal his brother's soul. But when a vice stains his soul, when he is a fool in his manners, when he is proud, and impatient of contradiction, when he disgraces himself by talking weakly, and yet believes himself wise and above the confidence of a sober person, then it concerns a friend to rescue him from folly. So Solon reproved Crœsus, and Socrates Alcibiades, and Cyrus chid Cyaxares, and Plato told to Dion, that of all things in the world he should beware of that folly "by which men please themselves, and despise a better judgment:" *quia ei vitio assidet solitudo*, "because that folly hath in it singularity," and is directly contrary to all capacities of a friendship, or the entertainments of necessary reproof.

3. Use not liberty of reproof in the days of sorrow and affliction;—for the calamity itself is enough to chastise the gaieties of sinning persons, and to bring them to repentance: it may be sometimes fit to insinuate the mention of the cause of that sorrow, in order to repentance, and a cure: but severe and biting language is then out of season, and it is like putting vinegar to an inflamed and smarting eye; it increases the anguish, and tempts unto impatience. In the accidents of a sad person, we must do as nurses to their falling children, snatch them up and still their cryings, and entertain their passion with some delightful avocation; but chide not then, when the sorrowful man needs to be refreshed. When Crates, the cynic, met Demetrius Phalereus in his banishment and trouble, he

went to him and spoke to him friendly, and used his philosophy in the ministries of comfort, and taught him to bear his trouble nobly, and so wrought on the criminal and wild Demetrius; and he moved him to repentance, who, if he had been chidden, as he expected, would have scorned the manners of the cynic, and hated his presence and institution; and Perseus killed Euchus and Eulæus, for reproving his rashness, when he was newly defeated by the Romans.

4. Avoid all the evil appendages of this liberty:—for since to reprove a sinning brother is, at the best, but an unwelcome and invidious employment, though it may also be understood to be full of charity; yet, therefore, we must not make it to be hateful by adding reproach, scorn, violent expressions, scurrility, derision, or bitter invectives. Jerome invited Epicharmus to supper; and he, knowing that Jerome had unfortunately killed his friend, replied to his invitation, *Atqui nuper cum amicos immolares, non vorasti*, "I think I may come, for when thou didst sacrifice thy friends, thou didst not devour them." This was a bitter sarcasm, and might, with more prudence and charity, have been avoided. They that intend charitably and conduct wisely, take occasions and proper seasons of reproof; they do it by way of question and similitude, by narrative and apologues, by commending something in him that is good, and discommending the same fault in other persons, by way that may disgrace that vice, and preserve the reputation of the man. Ammonius, observing that his scholars were nice and curious in their diet, and too effeminate for a philosophical life, caused his freedman to chastise his boy for not dining without vinegar, and all the while looked on the young gentlemen, and read to them a lecture of severity. Thus our dearest Lord reproved St. Peter; he looked on him when the sign was given with the crowing of the cock, and so chid him into a shower of penitential tears. Some use to mingle praises with their reprehensions, and to invite their friend's patience to endure remedy, by ministering some pleasure with their medicine; for as no wise man can well endure to be praised by him that knows not how to dispraise and to reprove, so neither will they endure to be reproved by him that knows not how to praise; for reproof from such a man betrays too great a love of

himself, and an illiberal spirit: he that will reprove wisely, must efform himself into all images of things which innocently and wisely he can put on; not by changing his manners, his principles, and the consequences of his discourse (as Alcibiades was supposed to do), for it it is best to keep the severity of our own principles, and the manner of our own living: for so Plato lived at Syracuse, just as he lived in the Academy; he was the same to Dionysius that he was to Dion: but this I mean; that he who means to win souls, and prevail to his brother's institution, must, as St. Paul did, effigiate and conform himself to those circumstances of living and discourse, by which he may prevail on the persuasions, by complying with the affections and usages of men.

These are the measures by which we are to communicate our counsels and advices to our erring brethren: to which I add this last advice, that no man should, at that time in which he is reproved, give counsel and reproof to his reprover, for that betrays an angry spirit, and makes discord out of piety, and changes charity into wrangling; and it looking like a revenge, makes it appear that himself took the first reproof for an injury.

That which remains now is, that I persuade men to do it, and that I persuade men to suffer it: it is sometimes hard to do it, but the cause is only, because it is hard to bear it; for if men were but apprehensive of their danger, and were not desirous to die, there were no more to be said in this affair; they would be as glad to entertain a severe reprover as a careful physician; of whom because most men are so willing to make use, so thankful for their care, so great valuers of their skill, such lovers of their persons,—no man is put to it to persuade men to be physicians, because there is no need to persuade men to live, or to be in health: if therefore men would as willingly be virtuous as be healthful, as willingly do no evil as suffer none, be as desirous of heaven as of a long life on earth, all the difficulties and temptations against this duty of reproving our sinner brother would soon be concealed; but let it be as it will, we must do it in duty and piety to him that needs; and if he be impatient of it, he needs it more: *et per hujusmodi offensas emetiendum est confragosum hoc iter:* it is a troublesome

employment, but it is duty and charity; and therefore, when it can, with hope of success; with prudence and piety, be done, no other consideration ought to interpose. And for the other part, those I mean who ought to be reproved,—they are to remember, that themselves give pensions to the preacher on purpose to be reproved if they shall need it;—that God hath instituted a holy order of men to that very purpose, that they should be severally told of all that is amiss;—that themselves chide their children and their servants for their good, and that they may amend;—and that they endure thirst to cure their dropsies;—that they suffer burnings to prevent the gangrenes;—and endure the cutting off a limb to preserve their lives;—and therefore, that it is a strange witchcraft and a prodigious folly, that, at so easy a mortification as the suffering of a plain friendly reproof, they will not set forward their interest of heaven, and suffer themselves to be set forward in their hopes of heaven:

——————— dura fatemur
Esse; sed, ut valeas, multa dolenda feras.

And when all remember, that flattery and importune silence suffer the mighty to perish like fools and inconsiderate persons, it ought to awake our spirits, and make us to attend to the admonition of a friend, with a silence great as midnight, and watchful as a widow's eyes. It was a strange thing, that Valentinian should, in the midst of so many Christian prelates, make a law to establish polygamy, and that no bishop should dare to reprehend him. The effect of it was this, that he had a son by a second wife, the first being alive and not divorced, and he left him heir of a great part of the empire; and what the effect of that was to his soul, God, who is his judge, best knows.

If now at last it be inquired—whether every man is bound to reprove every man, if he sins, and if he converse with him,—I answer, that if it should be so, it were to no purpose, and therefore for it there is no commandment: every man that can, may instruct him that wants it; but every man may not reprove him that is already instructed. That is an act of charity, for which there are no measures, but the other's necessity, and his

own opportunity; but this is also an act of discipline, and must, in many cases, suppose an authority; and in all cases such a liberty as is not fit to be permitted to mean, and ignorant, and inferior persons. I end this with the saying of a wise person, advising to every one concerning the use of the tongue, *aut lucrentur vitam loquendo, aut tacendo abscondant scientiam*; if they speak, let them minister to the good of souls; if they speak not, let them minister to sobriety; in the first, they serve the end of charity; in the other, of humility.

TWENTY-SEVEN SERMONS

PREACHED AT

GOLDEN GROVE;

BEING FOR THE

SUMMER HALF-YEAR,

BEGINNING ON WHITSUNDAY, AND ENDING ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

AND TRULY NOBLE

RICHARD LORD VAUGHAN,

EARL OF CARBERY, BARON OF EMLIN AND MOLINGAR,
KNIGHT OF THE HONORABLE ORDER OF THE BATH.

MY LORD,

I NOW present to your lordship a copy of those Sermons, the publication of which was first designed by the appetites of that hunger and thirst of righteousness, which made your dear lady, that rare soul, so dear to God, that he was pleased speedily to satisfy her, by carrying her from our shallow and impure cisterns, to drink out of the fountains of our Saviour. My lord, I shall but prick your tender eye, if I shall remind your lordship how diligent a hearer, how careful a recorder, how prudent an observer, how sedulous a practiser of holy discourses she was; and that therefore it was, that what did slide through her ear, she was desirous to place before her eye, that by those windows they might enter in, and dwell in her heart: but because, by this truth, I shall do advantage to the following discourses, give me leave, my lord, to fancy, that this book is derived on your lordship almost in the nature of a legacy from her, whose every thing was dearer to your lordship than your own eyes; and that what she was pleased to believe apt to minister to her devotions, and the religions of her pious and discerning soul,—may also be allowed a place in your closet, and a portion of your retirement, and a lodging in your thoughts, that they may encourage and instruct your practice, and promote that interest which is, and ought to be, dearer to you, than all

those blessings and separations, with which God hath remarked your family and person.

My lord, I confess the publication of these Sermons can so little serve the ends of my reputation, that I am therefore pleased the rather to do it, because I cannot at all be tempted, in so doing, to minister to any thing of vanity. Sermons may please when they first strike the ear, and yet appear flat and ignorant, when they are offered to the eye, and to an understanding that can consider at leisure. I remember, that a young gentleman of Athens, being to answer for his life, hired an orator to make his defence, and it pleased him well at his first reading; but when the young man, by often reading it that he might recite it publicly by heart, began to grow weary and displeased with it, the orator bade him consider, that the judges and the people were to hear it but once, and then it was likely they, at that first instant, might be as well pleased as he. This hath often represented to my mind the condition and fortune of sermons, and that I now part with the advantage they had in their delivery; but I have sufficiently answered myself in that, and am at rest perfectly in my thoughts as to that particular, if I can in any degree serve the interest of souls, and (which is next to that) obey the piety, and record the memory, of that dear saint, whose name and whose soul is blessed: for in both these ministries I doubt not but your lordship will be pleased, and account as if I had done also some service to yourself: your religion makes me sure of the first, and your piety puts the latter past my fears. However, I suppose in the whole account of this affair, this publication may be esteemed but like preaching to a numerous auditory; which if I had done, it would have been called either duty or charity; and therefore, will not now so readily be censured for vanity, if I make use of all the ways I can, to minister to the good of souls. But because my intentions are fair in themselves, and I hope, are acceptable to God, and will be fairly expounded by your lordship, whom for so great reason I so much value,—I shall not trouble you or the world with an apology for this so free publishing my weaknesses: I can better secure my reputation, by telling men how they ought to entertain sermons; for if they that read or hear do their duty aright, the preacher shall soon be secured of his fame, and untouched by censure.

1. For it were well if men would not inquire after the learning of the sermon, or its deliciousness to the ear or fancy, but observe its usefulness; not what concerns the preacher, but what concerns themselves; not what may take a vain reflexion on him, but what may substantially serve their own needs; that the attending to his discourses may not be spent in vain talk concerning him or his disparagements, but may be used as a duty and a part of religion, to minister to edification and instruction. When St. John reckoned the principles of evil actions, he told but of three,—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But there was then also in the world (and now it is grown into age, and strength, and faction) another lust, the lust of the ear,—and a fifth also, the lust of the tongue. Some people have an insatiable appetite in hearing; and hear only that they may hear, and talk, and make a party: they enter into their neighbor's house to kindle their candle, and espying there a glaring fire, sit down on the hearth, and warm themselves all day, and forget their errand; and, in the mean time, their own fires are not lighted, nor their families instructed or provided for, nor any need served, but a lazy pleasure, which is useless and impudent. Hearing or reading sermons, is, or ought to be, in order to practise; for so God intended it, that faith should come by hearing, and that charity should come by faith, and by both together we may be saved. For a man's ears (as Plutarch calls them) are *virtutum aviæ*, by them we are to hold and apprehend virtue; and unless we use them as men do vessels of dishonor, filling them with things fit to be thrown away, with any thing that is not necessary, we are by them more nearly brought to God than by all the senses beside. For although things placed before the eye, affect the mind more readily than the things we usually hear; yet the reason of that is, because we hear carelessly, and we hear variety: the same species dwells on the eye, and represents the same object in union and single representment; but the objects of the ear are broken into fragments of periods, and words, and syllables, and must be attended with a careful understanding: and because every thing diverts the sound, and every thing calls off the understanding, and the spirit of a man is truantly and trifling; therefore it is, that what men hear does so little affect them, and so weakly work towards the purposes of virtue: and yet nothing does

so affect the mind of man as those voices, to which we cannot choose but attend; and thunder and all loud voices from heaven rend the most stormy heart, and make the most obstinate pay to God the homage of trembling and fear; and the still voice of God usually takes the tribute of love, and choice, and obedience. Now since hearing is so effective an instrument of conveying impresses and images of things, and exciting purposes, and fixing resolutions, unless we hear weakly and imperfectly; it will be of the greater concernment that we be curious to hear in order to such purposes, which are perfective of the soul and of the Spirit, and not to dwell in fancy and speculation, in pleasures and trifling arrests, which continue the soul in its infancy and childhood, never letting it go forth into the wisdom and virtues of a man. I have read concerning Dionysius of Sicily, that, being delighted extremely with a minstrel that sung well, and struck his harp dexterously, he promised to give him a great reward; and that raised the fancy of the man, and made him play better. But when the music was done, and the man waited for his great hope, the king dismissed him empty, telling him, that he should carry away as much of the promised reward as himself did of the music, and that he had paid him sufficiently with the pleasure of the promise for the pleasure of the song: both their ears had been equally delighted, and the profit just none at all. So it is in many men's hearing sermons: they admire the preacher, and he pleases their ears, and neither of them both bear along with them any good; and the hearer hath as little good by the sermon, as the preacher by the air of the people's breath, when they make a noise, and admire, and understand not. And that also is a second caution I desire all men would take;

2. That they may never trouble the affairs of preaching and hearing respectively, with admiring the person of any man. To admire a preacher is such a reward of his pains and worth, as if you should crown a conqueror with a garland of roses, or a bride with laurel; it is an indecency, it is no part of the reward, which could be intended for him. For though it be a good-natured folly, yet it hath in it much danger: for by that means the preacher may lead his hearers captive, and make them servants of a faction, or of a lust; it makes them so much the less to be servants of Christ, by how much they call any man 'Master on earth;' it weakens the heart

and hands of others: it places themselves in a rank much below their proper station, changing from hearing the word of God, to admiration of the persons and faces of men; and it being a fault that falls on the more easy natures and softer understandings, does more easily abuse a man. And though such a person may have the good fortune to admire a good man and a wise; yet it is an ill disposition, and makes him liable to every man's abuse. *Stupidum hominem quavis oratione percelli*, said Heraclitus; "an undiscerning person is apt to be cozened by every oration." And, besides this, that preacher, whom some do admire, others will most certainly envy; and that also is to be provided against with diligence: and you must not admire too forwardly, for your own sake, lest you fall into the hands of a worse preacher; and for his sake, whom, when you admire, you also love, for others will be apt to envy him.

3. But that must by all men be avoided; for envy is the worst counsellor in the world, and the worst hearer of a wise discourse. I pity those men who live on flattery and wonder, and while they sit at the foot of the doctor's chair, stare in his face, and cry, Ἀκριβῶς, ὦ μεγάλου φιλοσόφου! "Rarely spoken! admirably done!" They are like callow and unfeathered birds, gaping perpetually to be fed from another's mouth, and they never come to the knowlege of the truth; such a knowlege as is effective, and expressed in a prudent and holy life. But those men that envy the preacher, besides that they are great enemies of the Holy Ghost, and are spitefully evil, because God is good to him, they are also enemies to themselves. He that envies the honors or the riches of another, envies for his own sake, and he would fain be rich with that wealth which sweats in his neighbor's coffers: but he that envies him that makes good sermons, envies himself, and is angry because himself may receive the benefit, and be improved, or delighted, or instructed, by another. He that is apt fondly to admire any man's person, must cure himself by considering, that the preacher is God's minister and servant; that he speaks God's word, and does it by the divine assistance; that he hath nothing of his own but sin and imperfection; that he does but his duty, and that also hardly enough; that he is highly answerable for his talent, and stands deeply charged with the cure of souls; and therefore, that he is to

be highly esteemed for the work's sake, not for the person: his industry and his charity are to be beloved, his ability is to be accounted on another stock, and for it the preacher and the hearer are both to give God thanks; but nothing is due to the man for that, save only that it is the rather to be employed, because by it we may better be instructed: but if any other reflexion be made on his person, it is next to the sin and danger of Herod and the people, when the fine oration was made μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, "with huge fancy;" the people were pleased, and Herod was admired, and God was angry, and an angel was sent to strike him with death and with dishonor. But the envy against a preacher is to be cured by a contrary discourse; and we must remember, that he is in the place of God, and hath received the gift of God, and the aids of the Holy Ghost; that by his abilities God is glorified, and we are instructed, and the interests of virtue and holy religion are promoted; that by this means God, who deserves that all souls should serve him for ever, is likely to have a fairer harvest of glory and service; and therefore, that envy is against him; that if we envy because we are not the instrument of this good to others, we must consider, that we desire the praise to ourselves, not to God. Admiration of a man supposes him to be inferior to the person so admired, but then he is pleased so to be; but envy supposes him as low, and he is displeased at it; and the envious man is not only less than the other man's virtue, but also contrary: the former is a vanity, but this is a vice; that wants wisdom, but this wants wisdom and charity too; that supposes an absence of some good, but this is a direct affliction and calamity.

4. And, after all this, if the preacher be not despised, he may proceed cheerfully in doing his duty, and the hearer may have some advantages by every sermon. I remember that Homer says, the wooers of Penelope laughed at Ulysses, because at his return he called for a loaf, and did not, to show his gallantry, call for swords and spears. Ulysses was so wise as to call for that he needed, and had it, and it did him more good than a whole armory would in his case. So is the plainest part of an easy and honest sermon; it is the sincere milk of the word, and nourishes a man's soul, though represented in its own natural simplicity; and there is hardly any orator but you may find occasion to praise something of

him. When Plato misliked the order and disposition of the oration of Lysias, yet he praised the good words and the elocution of the man. Euripides was commended for his fulness, Parmenides for his composition, Phocylides for his easiness, Archilochus for his argument, Sophocles for the unequalness of his style; so may men praise their preacher: he speaks pertinently, or he contrives wittily, or he speaks comely, or the man is pious, or charitable, or he hath a good text, or he speaks plainly, or he is not tedious, or, if he be, he is at least industrious, or he is the messenger of God; and that will not fail us, and let us love him for that. And we know those that love, can easily commend any thing, because they like every thing: and they say, fair men are like angels,—and the black are manly,—and the pale look like honey and the stars,—and the crook-nosed are like the sons of kings,—and if they be flat, they are gentle and easy,—and if they be deformed, they are humble, and not to be despised, because they have on them the impresses of divinity, and they are the sons of God. He that despises his preacher, is a hearer of arts and learning, not of the word of God; and though, when the word of God is set off with advantages and entertainments of the better faculties of our humility, it is more useful and of more effect; yet, when the word of God is spoken truly, though but read in plain language, it will become the disciple of Jesus to love that man whom God sends, and the public order and the laws have employed,—rather than to despise the weakness of him who delivers a mighty word.

Thus it is fit that men should be affected and employed when they hear and read sermons; coming hither not as into a theatre, where men observe the gestures or noises of the people, the brow and eyes of the most busy censurers, and make parties, and go aside with them that dislike every thing, or else admire not the things, but the persons; but as to a sacrifice, and as to a school where virtue is taught and exercised, and none come but such as put themselves under discipline, and intend to grow wiser and more virtuous, to appease their passion, from violent to become smooth and even, to have their faith established, and their hope confirmed, and their charity enlarged. They that are otherwise affected, do not do their duty: but if they be so minded as they ought, I and all men in my employment shall be secured against the tongues and

faces of men, who are *ingeniosi in alieno libro*, "witty to abuse and undervalue another man's book." And yet, besides these spiritual arts already reckoned, I have one security more: for, unless I deceive myself, I intend the glory of God sincerely, and the service of Jesus, in this publication: and therefore, being I do not seek myself or my own reputation, I shall not be troubled if they be lost in the voices of busy people, so that I be accepted of God, and found of him in the day of the Lord's visitation.

My lord, it was your charity and nobleness that gave me opportunity to do this service, little or great, unto religion; and whoever shall find any advantage to their soul by reading the following discourses, if they know how to bless God, and to bless all them that are God's instruments in doing them benefit, will, I hope, help to procure blessings to your person and family, and say a holy prayer, and name your lordship in their litanies, and remember, that at your own charges you have digged a well, and placed cisterns in the highways, that they may drink and be refreshed, and their souls may bless you. My lord, I hope this, even because I very much desire it, and because you exceedingly deserve it; and, above all, because God is good and gracious, and loves to reward such a charity, and such a religion, as is yours, by which you have employed me in the service of God, and in the ministries to your family. My lord, I am, most heartily, and for very many dear obligations,

Your lordship's most obliged,
most humble,
and most affectionate servant,
TAYLOR.

SUMMARY OF SERMON I.

ROMANS, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 9, 10.

PART I.

THE day in which the Church commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, was the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ; the first day that his religion was professed; when the Apostles opened their commission, and read it to all the people. *The Lord gave his Spirit* (or his word), *and great was the company of the preachers.* Observations on this change of *spirit* for *word.* The gospel is called *the Spirit,*

1. Because it contains such glorious mysteries, which were revealed by the immediate inspirations of the Spirit, not only in the matter, but also in the manner, and powers to comprehend them. This point explained and illustrated.

2. But when we had been taught all these mysteries, we could not, by any human power, have understood them, unless the Spirit of God had given us a new light, created in us a new capacity, and made us to be new creatures: this topic enlarged on.

3. The gospel is called *Spirit,* because it consists of spiritual promises and spiritual precepts; making all that embrace it truly, to become spiritual men: and therefore St. Paul adds an epithet, and calls it *a quickening spirit,* &c.

4. But, beyond this, is the reason which is the consummation of all the faithful. The gospel is called *the Spirit,* because by it God has given us not only *the Spirit of manifestation,* but *the Spirit of confirmation, or obsignation,* to all that

believe and obey; that is, the power of God is come on our hearts, by which we are made sure, in the nature of the thing, of a glorious inheritance: this topic enlarged on and explained.

Meaning of the phrase, *in the Spirit*, given, viz. to be in the power of the Spirit: this explained and illustrated: excellent state of a person who is thus in the Spirit, or in subjection to the Spirit. They that strive to be quit of this subjection love the liberty of outlaws, and the licentiousness of anarchy, &c. He that is in the Spirit, is under tutors and governors, until the appointed time of the Father, just as all great heirs are; only the first seizure which the Spirit makes is on the will. He that loves the yoke of Christ and the discipline of the gospel, is in the Spirit; that is, in the Spirit's power. On this foundation the Apostle has built two propositions: 1. whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, &c.: 2. whosoever is in Christ is dead to sin, and lives to the Spirit of Christ, &c.

I. All that belong to Christ have the Spirit of Christ. Immediately before the ascension, our Saviour bid his disciples *tarry at Jerusalem, till they should receive the promise of the Father*. Whoever stay at Jerusalem, and are in the actual communion of the Church of God, shall certainly receive this promise; for *it is made to as many as God shall call*. Manner in which the Spirit was formerly given described. But in the gospel, it is given without measure, &c.; so that Moses's wish is fulfilled; and all the Lord's people are prophets in some sense or other.

In the wisdom of the ancients it was observed, that there are four great cords which tie the heart of man to vanity and corruption; viz. pleasure, pain, fear, and desire: so that men are tempted, 1. to lust by pleasure; 2. to baser arts by covetousness; 3. to impatience by sorrow; 4. to dishonorable actions by fear: and this was the state of man by nature, and under

the law, and for ever, until the Spirit of God came, and, by four special operations, cured these four inconveniences.

1. God gave us his Spirit, that we might be insensible to worldly pleasures, having our souls wholly filled with spiritual and heavenly relishes. A man that hath tasted of God's Spirit, can instantly discern the madness that is in rage, the folly and disease that are in envy, the anguish that results from lust, &c.; and he understands things truly as they are; that is, that charity is the greatest nobleness in the world, temperance the best security of health, and that religion has the truest pleasures. And all these relishes are but the antipasts of heaven, &c.

And when once we have tasted of the Spirit of God, no food but that of angels, no cup but that of salvation is agreeable to us. And there is no greater external testimony that we are in the Spirit, and that the Spirit dwells in us, than if we find joy and spiritual pleasure in the greatest mysteries of our religion: this subject fully enlarged on.

2. The Spirit of God is given to all who truly belong to Christ, as an antidote against sorrows, against impatience, against the evil accidents of the world, and against the sinking of our spirits under the cross. There are noted in Scripture two births, besides the natural: the first is, to be born of water and of the Spirit; the second is, to be born of the Spirit and of fire: to these may be added a third, or an operation of the new birth, but the same spirit, the Spirit of rejoicing. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*, &c. There is a certain joy and spiritual rejoicing that accompanies them in whom the Holy Ghost dwells; a joy in the midst of sorrow, given to allay the pain of secular troubles, and to alleviate the burthen of persecution. This topic dilated on to the end.

PART II.

3. The Spirit of God is given to us as an antidote against evil concupiscences and sinful desires; and is then called *the Spirit of prayer and supplication.* Ever since the affections of the outer man prevailed on the ruins of the soul, all our desires grew sensual, and therefore hurtful: for ever after our body grew to be our enemy. In the looseness of nature and ignorance of philosophy, men used to pray, with their hands full of rapine, and hearts full of malice; and they prayed accordingly.

The Jews were better taught; but God gave the Spirit to them only in single rays: this subject enlarged on. But God hath poured his Spirit into our hearts, *the Spirit of prayer and supplication.* And now,

1. Christians *pray in spirit,* with sighs and groans; and know that God, who dwells within them, can as clearly distinguish those secret accents, as he knows the voice of his own thunder.

2. Likewise *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought:* it hath taught us that happiness cannot consist merely in freedom from afflictions, but in patience, resignation, and noble sufferance, &c.

3. Whereas only a Moses or a Samuel, a John or the Messias himself, could describe and indite forms of prayer to the accent of Heaven; now every wise and good man is instructed perfectly by the Scriptures what to ask for, &c.

4. The Spirit of God hath made our services to be spiritual, holy, the effects of choice and religion, the consequence of a spiritual sacrifice, and of a holy union with God. The prayer of a Christian is with the effects of the Spirit of sanctification: and this is by St. James called *the prayer of faith,* which is said to be certain to prevail.

5. The Spirit gives to us great relish and appetite for prayers:

and this St. Paul calls *serving of God in his Spirit;* that is, with a willing mind: and they who pray from custom only, or with trouble and unwillingness, &c. give a great testimony that they have not the Spirit of Christ within them; that Spirit which maketh intercession for the saints.

6. The Spirit of Christ and of prayer helps our infirmities, by giving us confidence and importunity; for as is our faith and trust in God, so is our hope, and so is our prayer; weary or lasting, long or short, not in words, but in works and in desires; for the words are no part of the spirit of prayer: this consists in holy desires and holy actions.

7. Some men have thought of a seventh way, and explain our praying in the Spirit by a mere volubility of language; which is directly to undervalue the Spirit of God and of Christ, to return to the materiality and imperfection of the law, to retire from Christ to Moses, from real graces to imaginary gifts: this topic fully dilated on.

Thus have been described the effluxes of the Holy Spirit on us in his great channels. But the great effect of them is this; that as by the acts of the spirits of darkness and our own malice our souls are rendered carnal, that is, servants to the passions and desires of the flesh; so, on the other side, by the grace of God, and *promise of the Father*, and influences of the Holy Ghost, our souls are recovered from that degradation, and transformed into a new nature: this subject is next to be considered.

II. As soon as the tyrant sin is overcome, and a new heart is put into us, instantly we have a new name given us, and we are esteemed a new creation, having a new nature within us. This may seem strange; but it is one of the great mysteries of the gospel. Every man naturally consists of soul and body; but every Christian man who belongs to Christ, has more; for he has body, soul, and spirit. The text is plain on this head; *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.* And

by Spirit is meant not merely the graces of God and his gifts, enabling us to do holy things; but the *Spirit of adoption*, through Christ, by which we are made sons of God, capable of a new state, intitled to another mode of duration, &c.: this subject fully dilated on.

This very mystery itself is the greatest possible encouragement to us in our duty, and by way of thankfulness. *He that gives great things, ought to have great acknowlegements.* If the fire be quenched, the fire of God's Spirit, God will kindle another in his anger that shall never be quenched: but if we entertain God's Spirit with our own purities, employ it diligently, and serve it willingly, then we shall be turned into spiritual beings.

If this be a new principle, and be given us in order to the actions of a holy life, we must take care that we receive not *the Spirit of God in vain*, and remember that it is a new life. *Every man hath within him either the Spirit of God or the spirit of the devil:* this topic enlarged on and illustrated. Here is a greater argument for a holy life than Moses had when addressing the children of Israel; *Behold I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:* this said Moses: but by this Scripture is set before us the good Spirit and the bad, God and the devil: we have to choose unto whose nature we will be likened, and into whose inheritance we will be adopted: this topic enlarged on.

The purport of this discourse stated to be, that since the Spirit of God is a new nature, we are thereby taught and enabled to serve God, by a constant course of holy living, without the frequent returns and interventions of such actions as men call *sins of infirmity.* Whosoever hath the Spirit of God, lives the life of grace; the Spirit of God rules in him, and is strong, and allows not such sins which we think unavoidable: this topic enlarged on, and the question more particularly considered.

1. No great sin is a sin of infirmity, or excusable on that

score: though indeed every sin may be said to be a sin of infirmity, in some sense or other. When a man is in the state of spiritual sickness or death, he is in a state of infirmity, a prisoner, a slave, weak in his judgment, impotent in his passions, &c.: but he that is thus in infirmity cannot be excused; for it is the aggravation of the state of his sin: such a one is the servant of sin, a slave to the devil, and heir to corruption; that is, he hath not the Spirit of Christ in him; for *where the Son is, there is liberty:* this topic enlarged on.

2. Sins of infirmity, as they are small in their instance, so they put on their degree of excusableness only according to the weakness or infirmity of a man's understanding: this enlarged on.

3. The violence or strength of temptation is not sufficient to excuse an action, if it leaves the understanding still able to judge; because a temptation cannot have any proper strength, but from ourselves, &c.

4. No habitual sin, which is repented of and committed again, is excusable under a pretence of infirmity; but that sin is certainly noted, and certainly condemned, and therefore returns, not because of the weakness of nature, but of grace: the principle of this is an evil spirit, an habitual aversion to God, a dominion of sin: this topic enlarged on. Concluding remarks.

SERMON I.

WHITSUNDAY.—OF THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.

ROMANS, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 9, 10.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.

PART I.

THIS day, in which the Church commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, was the first beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This was the first day that the religion was professed: now the Apostles first opened their commission, and read it to all the people. 'The Lord gave *his Spirit*,' (or, the Lord gave his Word) 'and great was the company of the preachers.' For so I make bold to render that prophecy of David. Christ was 'the Word' of God, *Verbum æternum;* but the Spirit was the Word of God, *Verbum patefactum:* Christ was the Word manifested *in* the flesh; the Spirit was the Word manifested *to* flesh, and set in dominion over, and in hostility against the flesh. The gospel and the Spirit are the same thing; not in substance; but 'the manifestation of the Spirit is the gospel of Jesus Christ:' and because he was this day manifested, the gospel was this day first preached, and it became a law to us, called 'the law of the Spirit of life;'* that is, a law taught us by the Spirit, leading

* Rom. viii. 2.

us to life eternal. But the gospel is called 'the Spirit,' 1. Because it contains in it such glorious mysteries, which were revealed by the immediate inspirations of the Spirit, not only in the matter itself, but also in the manner and powers to apprehend them. For what power of human understanding could have found out the incarnation of a God; that two natures, a finite and an infinite, could have been concentred into one hypostasis, or person; that a virgin should be a mother; that dead men should live again; that the κόνις ὀστέων λυθέντων, 'the ashes of dissolved bones' should become bright as the sun, blessed as the angels, swift in motion as thought, clear as the purest noon; that God should so love us, as to be willing to be reconciled to us, and yet that himself must die that he might pardon us; that God's most holy Son should give us his body to eat, and his blood to crown our chalices, and his Spirit to sanctify our souls, to turn our bodies into temperance, our souls into minds, our minds into spirit, our spirit into glory; that he, who can give us all things, who is Lord of men and angels, and King of all the creatures, should pray to God for us without intermission; that he, who reigns over all the world, should, at the day of judgment, 'give up the kingdom to God the Father,' and yet, after this resignation, himself and we with him should for ever reign the more gloriously; that we should be justified by faith in Christ, and that charity should be a part of faith, and that both should work as acts of duty, and as acts of relation; that God should crown the imperfect endeavors of his saints with glory, and that a human act should be rewarded with an eternal inheritance; that the wicked, for the transient pleasure of a few minutes, should be tormented with an absolute eternity of pains; that the waters of baptism, when they are hallowed by the Spirit, shall purge the soul from sin; and that the spirit of man should be nourished with the consecrated and mysterious elements, and that any such nourishment should bring a man up to heaven; and, after all this, that all Christian people, all that will be saved, must be partakers of the divine nature, of the nature, the infinite nature, of God, and must dwell in Christ, and Christ must dwell in them, and they must be in the Spirit, and the Spirit must be for ever in them? These are articles of so mysterious a philosophy, that we could have

inferred them from no premises, discoursed them on the stock of no natural or scientifical principles; nothing but God and God's Spirit could have taught them to us: and therefore the gospel is *Spiritus patefactus*, 'the manifestation of the Spirit,' *ad ædificationem*,* as the Apostle calls it, 'for edification,' and building us up to be a holy temple to the Lord.

2. But when we had been taught all these mysterious articles, we could not, by any human power, have understood them, unless the Spirit of God had given us a new light, and created in us a new capacity, and made us to be a new creature, of another definition. *Animalis homo*, ψυχικὸς, (that is, as St. Jude expounds the word, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχων) 'the animal, or the natural man, the man that hath not the Spirit, cannot discern the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned;'† that is, not to be understood but by the light proceeding from the Sun of Righteousness, and by that eye whose bird is the holy Dove, whose candle is the gospel.

> Scio incapacem te sacramenti, impie;
> Non posse cæcis mentibus mysterium
> Haurire nostrum: nil diurnum nox capit.‡

He that shall discourse Euclid's elements to a swine, or preach (as venerable Bede's story reports of him) to a rock, or talk metaphysics to a boar, will as much prevail on his assembly, as St. Peter and St. Paul could do on uncircumcised hearts and ears, on the indisposed Greeks and prejudicate Jews. An ox will relish the tender flesh of kids with as much gust and appetite, as an unspiritual and unsanctified man will do the discourses of angels or of an Apostle, if he should come to preach the secrets of the gospel. And we find it true by a sad experience. How many times doth God speak to us by his servants the prophets, by his Son, by his Apostles, by sermons, by spiritual books, by thousands of homilies, and arts of counsel and insinuation; and we sit as unconcerned as the pillars of a church, and hear the sermons as the Athenians did a story, or as we read a gazette? And if ever it come to pass, that we tremble, as Felix did, when we hear a sad story of

* 1 Cor. xii. 7. † 1 Cor. ii. 14 ‡ Prudent.

death, of 'righteousness and judgment to come,' then we put it off to another time, or we forget it, and think we had nothing to do but to give the good man a hearing; and as Anacharsis said of the Greeks, they used money for nothing but to cast account withal; so our hearers make use of sermons and discourses evangelical, but to fill up void spaces of their time, to help to tell an hour with, or pass it without tediousness. The reason of this is, a sad condemnation to such persons; they have not yet entertained the Spirit of God, they are in darkness: they were washed in water, but never baptised with the Spirit; 'for these things are spiritually discerned.' They would think the preacher rude, if he should say,—they are not Christians, they are not within the covenant of the gospel: but it is certain, that 'the Spirit of manifestation' is not yet on them; and that is the first effect of the Spirit, whereby we can be called sons of God, or relatives of Christ. If we do not apprehend, and greedily suck in, the precepts of this holy discipline, as aptly as merchants do discourse of gain, or farmers of fair harvests, we have nothing but the name of Christians; but we are no more such really, than mandrakes are men, or sponges are living creatures.

3. The gospel is called 'Spirit,' because it consists of spiritual promises and spiritual precepts, and makes all men that embrace it truly, to be spiritual men; and therefore St. Paul adds an epithet beyond this, calling it 'a quickening Spirit,'* that is, it puts life into spirits, which the law could not. The law bound us to punishment, but did not help us to obedience, because it gave not the promise of eternal life to its disciples. 'The Spirit,' that is, 'the gospel,' only does this: and this alone is it which comforts afflicted minds, which puts activeness into wearied spirit, which inflames our cold desires, and does ἀναζωπυρεῖ, 'blows up sparks' into live coals, and coals up to flames, and flames into perpetual burnings. And it is impossible that any man,—who believes and considers the great, the infinite, the unspeakable, the unimaginable, and never-ceasing joys, that are prepared for all the sons and daughters of the gospel,—should not desire them; and, unless he be a

* 1 Cor. xv. 45.

fool, he cannot but use means to obtain them, effective, hearty pursuances. For it is not directly in the nature of a man to neglect so great a good: there must be something in his manners, some obliquity in his will, or madness in his intellectuals, or incapacity in his naturals, that must make him sleep such a reward away, or change it for the pleasure of a drunken fever, or the vanity of a mistress, or the rage of a passion, or the unreasonableness of any sin. However, this promise is the life of all our actions, and the Spirit that first taught it is the life of our souls.

4. But, beyond this, is the reason which is the consummation of all the faithful. The gospel is called the 'Spirit,' because by and in the gospel, God hath given to us not only 'the Spirit of manifestation,' that is, of instruction and of catechism, of faith and confident assent; but the 'Spirit of confirmation, or obsignation' to all them that believe and obey the gospel of Christ: that is, the power of God is come on our hearts, by which, in an admirable manner, we are made sure of a glorious inheritance; made sure, I say, in the nature of the thing; and our own persuasions also are confirmed with an excellent, a comfortable, a discerning, and a reasonable hope: in the strength of which, and by whose aid, as we do not doubt of the performance of the promise, so we vigorously pursue all the parts of the condition, and are enabled to work all the work of God, so as not to be affrighted with fear, or seduced by vanity, or oppressed by lust, or drawn off by evil example, or abused by riches, or imprisoned by ambition and secular designs. This the Spirit of God does work in all his servants; and is called, 'the Spirit of obsignation, or the confirming Spirit,' because it confirms our hope, and assures our title to life eternal; and by means of it, and other its collateral assistances, it also confirms us in our duty, that we may not only profess in word, but live lives according to the gospel. And this is the sense of 'the Spirit' mentioned in the text; 'Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you:' that is, if ye be made partakers of the gospel, or of 'the Spirit of manifestation;' if ye be truly entitled to God, and have received the promise of the Father, then are ye not carnal men; ye are 'spiritual,' ye are 'in the Spirit:' if ye

have the Spirit in one sense to any purpose, ye have it also in another: if the Spirit be in you, you are in it; if it hath given you hope, it hath also enabled and ascertained your duty. For 'the Spirit of manifestation' will but upbraid you in the shame and horrors of a sad eternity, if you have not 'the Spirit of obsignation:' if the Holy Ghost be not come on you to great purposes of holiness, all other pretences are vain,—ye are still in the flesh, which shall never inherit the kingdom of God.

'In the Spirit:' that is, in the power of the Spirit. So the Greeks call him ἔνθεον, "who is possessed by a spirit," whom God hath filled with a celestial immission; he is said to be in God, when God is in him. And it is a similitude taken from persons encompassed with guards; they are *in custodia*, that is "in their power," under their command, moved at their dispose; they rest in their time, and receive laws from their authority, and admit visitors whom they appoint, and must be employed as they shall suffer: so are men who are in the Spirit; that is, they believe as he teaches, they work as he enables, they choose what he calls good, they are friends of his friends, and they hate with his hatred: with this only difference, that persons in custody are forced to do what their keepers please, and nothing is free but their wills; but they that are under the command of the Spirit, do all things which the Spirit commands, but they do them cheerfully; and their will is now the prisoner, but it is *in libera custodia*, the will is where it ought to be, and where it desires to be, and it cannot easily choose any thing else, because it is extremely in love with this, as the saints and angels in their state of beatific vision cannot choose but love God; and yet the liberty of their choice is not lessened, because the object fills all the capacities of the will and the understanding. Indifferency to an object is the lowest degree of liberty, and supposes unworthiness or defect in the object, or the apprehension: but the will is then the freest and most perfect in its operation, when it intirely pursues a good with so certain determination and clear election, that the contrary evil cannot come into dispute or pretence. Such in our proportions is the liberty of the sons of God; it is a holy and amiable captivity to the Spirit: the will of man is in love with those chains which draw us to God, and loves the fetters that

confine us to the pleasures and religion of the kingdom. And as no man will complain that his temples are restrained, and his head is prisoner, when it is encircled with a crown; so when the Son of God hath made us free, and hath only subjected us to the service and dominion of the Spirit, we are free as princes within the circle of their diadem, and our chains are bracelets, and the law is a law of liberty, and 'his service is perfect freedom;' and the more we are subjects, the more 'we shall reign as kings;' and the faster we run, the easier is our burden; and Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird, not loads, but helps to motion, without them the body falls; and we do not pity birds, when in summer we wish them unfeathered and callow, or bald as eggs, that they might be cooler and lighter. Such is the load and captivity of the soul, when we do the work of God, and are his servants, and under the government of the Spirit. They that strive to be quit of this subjection, love the liberty of outlaws, and the licentiousness of anarchy, and the freedom of sad widows and distressed orphans: for so rebels, and fools, and children, long to be rid of their princes, and their guardians, and their tutors, that they may be accursed without law, and be undone without control, and be ignorant and miserable without a teacher, and without discipline. He that is in the Spirit, is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father, just as all great heirs are; only, the first seizure the Spirit makes is on the will. He that loves the yoke of Christ, and the discipline of the gospel, he is in the Spirit, that is, in the Spirit's power.

On this foundation the Apostle hath built these two propositions: 1. Whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: he does not belong to Christ at all: he is not partaker of his Spirit, and therefore shall never be partaker of his glory. 2. Whosoever is in Christ is dead to sin, and lives to the Spirit of Christ; that is, lives a spiritual, a holy, and a sanctified life. These are to be considered distinctly.

I. All that belong to Christ have the Spirit of Christ. Immediately before the ascension, our blessed Saviour bid his disciples 'tarry in Jerusalem, till they should receive the promise of the Father.' Whosoever stay at Jerusalem, and are in the actual communion of the church of God, shall certainly receive

this promise: 'for it is made to you and to your children,' saith St. Peter, 'and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.' All shall receive the Spirit of Christ, the promise of the Father, because this was the great instrument of distinction between the law and the gospel. In the law, God gave his Spirit, 1. to some; to them, 2. extra-regularly; 3. without solemnity; 4. in small proportions, like the dew on Gideon's fleece; a little portion was wet sometimes with the dew of heaven, when all the earth besides was dry. And the Jews called it *filiam vocis*, 'the daughter of a voice,' still, and small, and seldom, and that by secret whispers, and sometimes inarticulate, by way of enthusiasm, rather than of instruction; and God spake by the prophets, transmitting the sound as through an organ-pipe, things which themselves oftentimes understood not. But in the gospel, the Spirit is given without measure: first poured forth on our head Christ Jesus; then, descending on the beard of Aaron, the fathers of the church, and thence falling, like the tears of the balsam of Judea, on the foot of the plant, on the lowest of the people. And this is given regularly to all that ask it, to all that can receive it, and by a solemn ceremony, and conveyed by a sacrament; and is now, not the daughter of a voice, but the mother of many voices, of divided tongues, and united hearts; of the tongues of prophets, and the duty of saints; of the sermons of Apostles, and the wisdom of governors: it is the parent of boldness and fortitude to martyrs, the fountain of learning to doctors, an ocean of all things excellent to all who are within the ship and bounds of the Catholic church: so that old men and young men, maidens and boys, the scribe and the unlearned, the judge and the advocate, the priest and the people, are full of the Spirit, if they belong to God. Moses's wish is fulfilled, and all the Lord's people are prophets in some sense or other.

In the wisdom of the ancients it was observed, that there are four great cords, which tie the heart of man to inconvenience and a prison, make it a servant of vanity, and a heir of corruption; 1. pleasure, and, 2. pain; 3. fear, and, 4. desire.

> Πρὸς τὸ τετράχορδον δ' ὅλον,
> τὴν ἡδονὴν, ἐπιθυμίαν, λύπην, φόβον,
> ἀσκήσασέ γε καὶ πολλῆς μάχης δέον.

These are they that exercise all the wisdom and resolutions of man, and all the powers that God hath given him.

> οὗτοι γὰρ, οὗτοι καὶ διὰ σπλάγχνων ἀεὶ
> χωροῦσι καὶ κυκῶσιν ἀνθρώπων κέαρ, said Agathon.

These are those evil spirits that possess the heart of man, and mingle with all his actions; so that either men are tempted to, 1. lust by pleasure, or, 2. to baser arts by covetousness, or, 3. to impatience by sorrow, or, 4. to dishonorable actions by fear: and this is the state of man by nature, and under the law, and for ever, till the Spirit of God came, and by four special operations cured these four inconveniences, and restrained or sweetened these unwholesome waters.

1. God gave us his Spirit that we might be insensible of worldly pleasures, having our souls wholly filled with spiritual and heavenly relishes. For when God's Spirit hath entered us, and possessed us as his temple, or as his dwelling, instantly we begin to taste manna, and to loathe the diet of Egypt; we begin to consider concerning heaven, and to prefer eternity before moments, and to love the pleasures of the soul above the sottish and beastly pleasures of the body. Then we can consider that the pleasures of a drunken meeting cannot make a recompense for the pains of a surfeit, and that night's intemperance; much less for the torments of eternity: then we are quick to discern that the itch and scab of lustful appetites is not worth the charges of a chirurgeon: much less can it pay for the disgrace, the danger, the sickness, the death, and the hell, of lustful persons. Then we wonder that any man should venture his head to get a crown unjustly; or that, for the hazard of a victory, he should throw away all his hopes of heaven certainly.

A man that hath tasted of God's Spirit, can instantly discern the madness that is in rage, the folly and the disease that are in envy, the anguish and tediousness that are in lust, the dishonor that is in breaking our faith and telling a lie; and understands things truly as they are; that is, that charity is the greatest nobleness in the world; that religion hath in it the greatest pleasures; that temperance is the best security of health; that humility is the surest way to honor. And all these relishes are nothing but antepasts of heaven, where the quint-

essence of all these pleasures shall be swallowed for ever; where the chaste shall follow the Lamb, and the virgins sing there where the mother of God shall reign; and the zealous converters of souls, and laborers in God's vineyard, shall worship eternally; where St. Peter and St. Paul do wear their crowns of righteousness; and the patient persons shall be rewarded with Job, and the meek persons with Christ and Moses, and all with God: the very expectation of which,—proceeded from a hope begotten in us by 'the Spirit of manifestation,' and bred up and strengthened by 'the Spirit of obsignation,' —is so delicious an entertainment of all our reasonable appetites, that a spiritual man can no more be removed or enticed from the love of God and of religion, than the moon from her orb, or a mother from loving the son of her joys and of her sorrows.

This was observed by St. Peter; 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.'* When once we have tasted the grace of God, the sweetnesses of his Spirit; then no food but 'the food of angels,' no cup but 'the cup of salvation,' the 'divining cup,' in which we drink salvation to our God, and call on the name of the Lord with ravishment and thanksgiving. And there is no greater external testimony that we are in the Spirit, and that the Spirit dwells in us, than if we find joy and delight and spiritual pleasure in the greatest mysteries of our religion; if we communicate often, and that with appetite, and a forward choice, and an unwearied devotion, and a heart truly fixed on God, and on the offices of a holy worship. He that loathes good meat, is sick at heart, or near it; and he that despises, or hath not a holy appetite to, the food of angels, the wine of elect souls, is fit to succeed the prodigal at his banquet of sin and husks, and to be partaker of the table of devils: but all they who have God's Spirit, love to feast at the supper of the Lamb, and have no appetites but what are of the Spirit, or servants to the Spirit. I have read of a spiritual person who saw heaven but in a dream, but such as made great impression on him, and was represented with

* 1 Pet. ii. 2.

vigorous and pertinacious phantasms, not easily disbanding; and when he awaked he knew not his cell, he remembered not him that slept in the same dorter, nor could tell how night and day were distinguished, nor could discern oil from wine; but called out for his vision again: *Redde mihi campos meos floridos, columnam auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos;* "Give me my fields again, my most delicious fields, my pillar of a glorious light, my companion St. Jerome, my assistant angels." And this lasted till he was told of his duty, and matter of obedience, and the fear of a sin had disencharmed him, and caused him to take care, lest he lose the substance out of greediness to possess the shadow.

And if it were given to any of us to see paradise, or the third heaven, as it was to St. Paul; could it be that ever we should love any thing but Christ, or follow any guide but the Spirit, or desire any thing but heaven, or understand any thing to be pleasant but what shall lead thither? Now what a vision can do, that the Spirit doth certainly to them that entertain him. They that have him really, and not in pretence only, are certainly great despisers of the things of the world. The Spirit doth not create or enlarge our appetites of things below: spiritual men are not designed to reign on earth, but to reign over their lusts and sottish appetites. The Spirit doth not inflame our thirst of wealth, but extinguishes it, and makes us to 'esteem all things as loss, and as dung, so that we may gain Christ.' No gain then is pleasant but godliness, no ambition but longings after heaven, no revenge but against ourselves for sinning; nothing but God and Christ: *Deus meus, et omnia:* and *date nobis animas, cætera vobis tollite,* as the king of Sodom said to Abraham; 'Secure but the souls to us, and take our goods.' Indeed, this is a good sign that we have the Spirit.

St. John spake a hard saying, but by the Spirit of manifestation we are all taught to understand it: 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.'* The seed of God is the Spirit, which hath a plastic power to efform us in

* 1 Epist. iii. 9.

similitudinem filiorum Dei, 'into the image of the sons of God;' and as long as this remains in us, while the Spirit dwells in us, we cannot sin; that is, it is against our natures, our reformed natures, to sin. And as we say, we cannot endure such a potion, we cannot suffer such a pain; that is, we cannot without great trouble, we cannot without doing violence to our nature; so all spiritual men, all that are born of God, and the seed of God remains in them, 'they cannot sin;' cannot *without trouble*, and doing against their natures, and their most passionate inclinations. A man, if you speak naturally, can masticate gums, and he can break his own legs, and he can sip up, by little draughts, mixtures of aloes, and rhubarb, of henbane, or the deadly nightshade; but he cannot do this naturally, or willingly, or cheerfully, or with delight. Every sin is against a good man's nature; he is ill at ease when he hath missed his usual prayers, he is amazed if he have fallen into an error, he is infinitely ashamed of his imprudence; he remembers a sin as he thinks of an enemy, or the horrors of a midnight apparition: for all his capacities, his understanding, and his choosing faculties, are filled up with the opinion and persuasions, with the love and with the desires, of God. And this, I say, is the great benefit of the Spirit, which God hath given to us as an antidote against worldly pleasures. And therefore, St. Paul joins them as consequent to each other: 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,' &c.* First, we are enlightened in baptism, and by 'the Spirit of manifestation,' the revelations of the gospel: then we relish and taste interior excellences, and we receive the Holy Ghost, 'the Spirit of confirmation,' and he gives us a taste of the powers of the world to come; that is, of the great efficacy that is in the article of eternal life, to persuade us to religion and holy living: then we feel that as the belief of that article dwells on our understanding, and is incorporated into our wills and choice, so we grow powerful to resist sin by the strengths of the Spirit, to defy all carnal pleasure,

* Heb. vi. 4.

and to suppress and mortify it by the powers of this article: those are 'the powers of the world to come.'

2. The Spirit of God is given to all who truly belong to Christ, as an antidote against sorrows, against impatience, against the evil accidents of the world, and against the oppression and sinking of our spirits under the cross. There are in Scripture noted two births besides the natural; to which also by analogy we may add a third. The first is, to be born of water and the Spirit. It is ἓν διὰ δυοῖν, one thing signified by a divided appellative, by two substantives, "water *and* the Spirit," that is, *Spiritus aqueus*, the 'Spirit moving on the waters of baptism.' The second is, to be born of 'Spirit and fire:' for so Christ was promised to 'baptise us with the Holy Ghost and with fire;' that is, *cum Spiritu igneo*, 'with a fiery Spirit,' the Spirit as it descended in Pentecost in the shape of fiery tongues. And as the watery Spirit washed away the sins of the church, so the Spirit of fire enkindles charity and the love of God. Τὸ πῦρ καθαίρει, τὸ ὕδωρ ἁγνίζει, says Plutarch, the Spirit is the same under both the titles, and it enables the church with gifts and graces. And from these there is another operation of the new birth, but the same Spirit, the Spirit of rejoicing, or *spiritus exultans*, *spiritus lætitiæ*, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all *joy* and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.'* There is a certain joy and spiritual rejoicing, that accompanies them in whom the Holy Ghost doth dwell; a joy in the midst of sorrow; a joy given to allay the sorrows of secular troubles, and to alleviate the burden of persecution. This St. Paul notes to this purpose: 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.'† Worldly afflictions and spiritual joys may very well dwell together; and if God did not supply us out of his storehouses, the sorrow of this world would be more and unmixed, and the troubles of persecution would be too great for natural confidences. For who shall make him recompense that lost his life in a duel, fought about a draught of wine, or a cheaper woman? What arguments shall invite a

* Rom. xv. 13. † 1 Thes. i. 6.

man to suffer torments in testimony of a proposition of natural philosophy? And by what instruments shall we comfort a man who is sick and poor, and disgraced, and vicious, and lies cursing, and despairs of any thing hereafter? That man's condition proclaims what it is to want the Spirit of God, 'the Spirit of comfort.' Now this Spirit of comfort is the hope and confidence, the certain expectation of partaking in the inheritance of Jesus; this is the faith and patience of the saints; this is the refreshment of all wearied travellers, the cordial of all languishing sinners, the support of the scrupulous, the guide of the doubtful, the anchor of timorous and fluctuating souls, the confidence and the staff of the penitent. He that is deprived of his whole estate for a good conscience, by the Spirit he meets this comfort, that he shall find it again with advantage in the day of restitution: and this comfort was so manifest in the first days of Christianity, that it was no unfrequent thing to see holy persons court a martyrdom with a fondness as great as is our impatience and timorousness in every persecution. Till the Spirit of God comes on us, we are ὀλιγόψυχοι. *Inopis nos atque pusilli finxerunt animi;* "we have little souls," little faith, and as little patience; we fall at every stumbling-block, and sink under every temptation; and our hearts fail us, and we die for fear of death, and lose our souls to preserve our estates or our persons, till the Spirit of God 'fills us with joy in believing:' and the man that is in a great joy, cares not for any trouble that is less than his joy; and God hath taken so great care to secure this to us, that he hath turned it into a precept, 'Rejoice evermore;' and, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.'* But this rejoicing must be only in the hope that is laid up for us; ἐν ἐλπίδι χαίροντες· so the Apostle, 'rejoicing in hope.'† For although God sometimes makes a cup of sensible comfort to overflow the spirit of a man, and thereby loves to refresh his sorrows; yet this is from a secret principle not regularly given, not to be waited for, not to be prayed for, and it may fail us if we think on it: but the hope of life eternal can never fail us, and the joy of that is great enough to make us suffer any thing, or to do any thing.

* 1 Thes. v. 16. † Rom. xii. 12.

——————Ibimus, ibimus,
Utcunque præcedes, supremum
Carpere iter comites parati.*

To death, to bands, to poverty, to banishment, to tribunals, any whither in hope of life eternal: as long as this anchor holds, we may suffer a storm, but cannot suffer shipwreck. And I desire you, by the way, to observe how good a God we serve, and how excellent a religion Christ taught, when one of his great precepts is, that we should 'rejoice and be exceeding glad:' and God hath given us the spirit of rejoicing, not a sullen melancholy spirit, not the spirit of bondage or of a slave, but the Spirit of his Son, consigning us by a holy conscience to 'joys unspeakable and full of glory.' And from hence you may also infer, that those who sink under a persecution, or are impatient in a sad accident, they put out their own fires which the Spirit of the Lord hath kindled, and lose those glories which stand behind the cloud.

SERMON I.

PART II.

3. The Spirit of God is given us as an antidote against evil concupiscences and sinful desires, and is then called 'the Spirit of prayer and supplication.' For, ever since the affections of the outward man prevailed on the ruins of the soul, all our desires were sensual, and therefore hurtful: for, ever after, our body grew to be our enemy. In the loosenesses of nature, and amongst the ignorance or imperfection of Gentile philosophy, men used to pray with their hands full of rapine, and their mouths full of blood, and their hearts full of malice; and they

* Hor. Od. ii. 17. 10.

prayed accordingly, for an opportunity to steal, for a fair body, for a prosperous revenge, for a prevailing malice, for the satisfaction of whatsoever they could be tempted to by any object, by any lust, by any devil whatsoever.

The Jews were better taught; for God was their teacher, and he gave the Spirit to them in single rays. But as the 'Spirit of obsignation' was given to them under a seal, and within a veil, so the 'Spirit of manifestation,' or 'patefaction,' was like the gem of a vine, or the bud of a rose, plain *indices* and significations of life, and principles of juice and sweetness; but yet scarce out of the doors of their causes: they had the infancy of knowlege, and revelations to them were given as catechism is taught to our children; which they read with the eye of a bird, and speak with the tongue of a bee, and understand with the heart of a child; that is, weakly and imperfectly. And they understand so little, that, 1. they thought God heard them not, unless they spake their prayers, at least efforming their words within their lips; and, 2. their forms of prayer were so few and seldom, that to teach a form of prayer, or to compose a collect, was thought a work fit for a prophet, or the founder of an institution. 3. Add to this, that, as their promises were temporal, so were their hopes; as were their hopes, so were their desires; and according to their desires, so were their prayers. And although the Psalms of David was their great office, and the treasury of devotion to their nation,—and very worthily; yet it was full of wishes for temporals, invocations of God the avenger, on God the Lord of hosts, on God the enemy of their enemies: and they desired their nation to be prospered, and themselves blessed, and distinguished from all the world by the effects of such desires. This was the state of prayer in their synagogues; save only that it had also this allay; 4. that their addresses to God were crass, material, typical, and full of shadows and imaginary, and patterns of things to come; and so in its very being and constitution was relative and imperfect. But that we may see how great things the Lord hath done for us, God hath poured his Spirit into our hearts, 'the Spirit of prayer and supplication.'

And now, 1. Christians 'pray in their spirit,' with sighs and groans, and know that God, who dwells within them, can

as clearly distinguish those secret accents, and read their meaning in the Spirit, as plainly as he knows the voice of his own thunder, or could discern the letter of the law written in the tables of stone by the finger of God.

2. Likewise 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.' This is, when God sends an affliction or persecution on us, we are indeed extreme apt to lay our hand on the wound, and never take it off but when we lift it up in prayer to be delivered from that sadness: and then we pray fervently to be cured of a sickness, to be delivered from a tyrant, to be snatched from the grave, not to perish in the danger. But the Spirit of God hath, from all sad accidents, drawn the veil of error and the cloud of intolerableness, and taught us that our happiness cannot consist in freedom or deliverances from persecutions, but in patience, resignation, and noble sufferance; and that we are not then so blessed when God hath turned our scourges into ease and delicacy, as when we convert our very scorpions into the exercise of virtues: so that now the Spirit having helped our infirmities, that is, comforted our weaknesses and afflictions, our sorrows and impatience, by this proposition, that 'All things work together for the good of them that fear God,' he taught us to pray for grace, for patience under the cross, for charity to our persecutors, for rejoicing in tribulation, for perseverance and boldness in the faith, and for whatsoever will bring us safely to heaven.

3. Whereas only a Moses or a Samuel, a David or a Daniel, a John the Baptist or the Messias himself, could describe and indite forms of prayer and thanksgiving to the tune and accent of heaven; now every wise and good man is instructed perfectly in the Scriptures, which are the writings of the Spirit, what things he may, and what things he must ask for.

4. The Spirit of God hath made our services to be spiritual, intellectual, holy, and effects of choice and religion, the consequence of a spiritual sacrifice, and of a holy union with God. The prayer of a Christian is with the effects of the 'Spirit of sanctification;' and then we pray with the Spirit, when we pray with holiness, which is the great fruit, the principal gift, of the Spirit. And this is by St. James called 'the prayer of faith,'

and is said to be certain that it shall prevail. Such a praying with the Spirit when our prayers are the voices of our spirits, and our spirits are first taught, then sanctified by God's Spirit, shall never fail of its effect; because then it is that 'the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us;' that is, hath enabled us to do it on his strengths; we speak his sense, we live his life, we breathe his accents, we desire in order to his purposes, and our persons are gracious by his holiness, and are accepted by his interpellation and intercession in the act and offices of Christ. This is 'praying with the Spirit.' To which, by way of explication, I add these two annexes of holy prayer, in respect of which also every good man prays with the Spirit.

5. The Spirit gives us great relish and appetite to our prayers; and this St. Paul calls 'serving of God in his Spirit,' ἐν πνεύματί μου,* that is, with a willing mind: not as Jonas did his errand, but as Christ did die for us; he was straitened till he had accomplished it. And they that say their prayers out of custom only, or to comply with external circumstances, or collateral advantages, or pray with trouble and unwillingness, give a very great testimony that they have not the Spirit of Christ within them, that Spirit which maketh intercession for the saints: but he that delighteth in his prayers, not by a sensible or fantastic pleasure, but whose choice dwells in his prayers, and whose conversation is with God in holy living, and praying accordingly, that man hath the Spirit of Christ, and therefore belongs to Christ; for by this Spirit it is that Christ prays in heaven for us: and if we do not pray on earth in the same manner according to our measures, we had as good hold our peace; our prayers are an abominable sacrifice, and send up to God no better a perfume than if we burned assafœtida, or the raw flesh of a murdered man on the altar of incense.

6. The Spirit of Christ and of prayer helps our infirmities, by giving us confidence and importunity. I put them together: for as our faith is, and our trust in God, so is our hope, and so is our prayer; weary or lasting, long or short, not in words, but in works and in desires; for the words of prayer are no part of the Spirit of prayer. Words may be the body of it, but the

* Rom. i. 9.

Spirit of prayer always consists in holiness, that is, in holy desires and holy actions. Words are not properly capable of being holy; all words are in themselves servants of things; and the holiness of a prayer is not at all concerned in the manner of its expression, but in the spirit of it, that is, in the violence of its desires, and the innocence of its ends, and the continuance of its employment. This is the verification of that great prophecy which Christ made, that 'in all the world the true worshippers should worship in spirit and in truth;' that is, with a pure mind, with holy desires, for spiritual things, according to the mind of the Spirit, in the imitation of Christ's intercession, with perseverance, with charity or love. That is the Spirit of God, and these are the spiritualities of the gospel, and the formalities of prayers as they are Christian and evangelical.

7. Some men have thought of a seventh way, and explicate our praying in the Spirit by a mere volubility of language; which indeed is a direct undervaluing the Spirit of God and of Christ, 'the Spirit of manifestation and intercession:' it is to return to the materiality and imperfection of the law; it is to worship God in outward forms, and to think that God's service consists in shells and rinds, in lips and voices, in shadows and images of things; it is to retire from Christ to Moses, and, at the best, it is going from real graces to imaginary gifts. And when praying with the Spirit hath in it so many excellences, and consists of so many parts of holiness and sanctification, and is an act of the inner man; we shall be infinitely mistaken if we let go this substance, and catch at the shadow, and sit down and rest in the imagination of an improbable, unnecessary, useless gift of speaking, to which the nature of many men, and the art of all learned men, and the very use and confidence of ignorant men, is too abundantly sufficient. Let us not so despise the Spirit of Christ, as to make it no other than the breath of our lungs. For though it might be possible, that at the first, and when forms of prayer were few and seldom, the Spirit of God might dictate the very words to the Apostles and first Christians; yet, it follows not, that therefore he does so still, to all that pretend praying with the Spirit. For if he did not then, at the first, dictate words (as we know not whether he did or no), why shall he be supposed to do so now? If he did then,

it follows that he does not now: because his doing it then was sufficient for all men since; for so the forms taught by the Spirit were patterns for others to imitate, in all the descending ages of the church. There was once an occasion so great, that the Spirit of God did think it a work fit for him to teach a man to weave silk, or embroider gold, or work in brass, as it happened to Bezaleel and Aholiah: but then every weaver or worker in brass may, by the same reason, pretend that he works by the Spirit, as that he prays by the Spirit, if by prayer he means forming the words. For although in the case of working, it was certain that the Spirit did teach; in the case of inditing or forming the words, it is not certain whether he did or no; yet because in both it was extraordinary, if it was at all, and ever since in both it is infinitely needless; to pretend the Spirit in forms of every man's making (even though they be of contrary religions, and pray one against the other), it may serve an end of a fantastic and hypochondriacal religion, or a secret ambition, but not the ends of God, or the honor of the Spirit.

The Jews in their declensions to folly and idolatry did worship the stone of imagination, that is, certain smooth images, in which, by art-magic, pictures and little faces were represented, declaring hidden things and stolen goods; and God severely forbade this baseness.* But we also have taken up this folly, and worship the stone of imagination: we beget imperfect phantasms and speculative images in our fancy, and we fall down and worship them; never considering that the Spirit of God never appears through such spectres. Prayer is one of the noblest exercises of Christian religion; or rather, it is that duty in which all graces are concentred. Prayer is charity, it is faith, it is a conformity to God's will, a desiring according to the desires of heaven, an imitation of Christ's intercession; and prayer must suppose all holiness, or else it is nothing: and therefore, all that in which men need God's Spirit, all that is in order to prayer. Baptism is but a prayer, and the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper is but a prayer; a prayer of sacrifice representative, and a prayer of oblation, and a prayer of intercession, and a prayer of thanksgiving. And

* Levit. xxvi. 1.

obedience is a prayer, and begs and procures blessings: and if the Holy Ghost hath sanctified the whole man, then he hath sanctified the prayer of the man, and not till then. And if ever there was, or could be, any other praying with the Spirit, it was such a one as a wicked man might have; and therefore, it cannot be a note of distinction between the good and bad, between the saints and men of the world. But this only, which I have described from the fountains of Scripture, is that which a good man can have, and therefore, this is it in which we ought to rejoice; 'that he that glories, may glory in the Lord.'

Thus I have, as I could, described the effluxes of the Holy Spirit on us in his great channels. But the great effect of them is this: that as by the arts of the spirits of darkness and our own malice, our souls are turned into flesh (not in the natural sense, but in the moral and theological), and *animalis homo* is the same with *carnalis*, that is, his soul is a servant of the passions and desires of the flesh, and is flesh in its operations and ends, in its principles and actions; so, on the other side, by the grace of God, and 'the promise of the Father,' and the influences of the Holy Ghost, our souls are not only recovered from the state of flesh, and reduced back to the intireness of animal operations, but they are heightened into spirit, and transformed into a new nature. And this is a new article, and now to be considered.

II. St. Jerome tells of the custom of the empire; when a tyrant was overcome, they used to break the head of his statues, and on the same trunk to set the head of the conqueror, and so it passed wholly for the new prince. So it is in the kingdom of grace. As soon as the tyrant sin is overcome, and a new heart is put into us, or that we serve under a new head, instantly we have a new name given us, and we are esteemed a new creation; and not only changed in manners, but we have a new nature within us, even a third part of an essential constitution. This may seem strange: and indeed it is so: and it is one of the great mysteriousnesses of the gospel. Every man naturally consists of soul and body; but every Christian man that belongs to Christ, hath more; for he hath body, and soul, and spirit. My text is plain for it: 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' And by Spirit is not

meant only the graces of God, and his gifts enabling us to do holy things: there is more belongs to a good man than so. But as when God made man, he made him after his own image, and breathed into him the spirit of life, and he was made *in animam viventem*, 'into a living soul:' then he was made a man; so in the new creation, Christ, 'by whom God made the worlds,' intends to conform us to his image, and he hath given us 'the Spirit of adoption,' by which we are made sons of God; and by the spirit of a new life we are made new creatures, capable of a new state, intitled to another manner of duration, enabled to do new and greater actions in order to higher ends; we have new affections, new understandings, new wills: *vetera transierunt, et ecce omnia nova facta sunt*; 'all things are become new.' And this is called 'the seed of God,' when it relates to the principle and cause of this production; but the thing that is produced is a spirit, and that is as much in nature beyond a soul, as a soul is beyond a body. This great mystery I should not utter but on the greatest authority in the world, and from an infallible doctor; I mean St. Paul, who from Christ taught the Church more secrets than all the whole college besides; 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'* We are not sanctified wholly, nor preserved in safety, unless, besides our souls and bodies, our spirit also be kept blameless. This distinction is nice, and infinitely above human reason: but 'the word of God,' saith the same Apostle, 'is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and the spirit:'† and that hath taught us to distinguish the principle of a new life from the principle of the old, the celestial and the natural; and thus it is.

The Spirit (as I now discourse of it) is a principle infused into us by God, when we become his children, whereby we live the life of grace, and understand the secrets of the kingdom, and have passions and desires of things beyond and contrary to our natural appetites, enabling us not only to sobriety, which is

* 1 Thess. v. 23. † Heb. iv. 12.

the duty of the body,—not only to justice, which is the rectitude of the soul,—but to such a sanctity as makes us like to God; for so saith the Spirit of God, 'Be ye holy, as I am: be pure, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is pure, as he is perfect:' which because it cannot be a perfection of degrees, it must be *in similitudine naturæ*, 'in the likeness of that nature,' which God hath given us in the new birth, that by it we might resemble his excellency and holiness. And this I conceive to be the meaning of St. Peter, 'According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness,' (that is, to this new life of godliness) 'through the knowlege of him, that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature:'* so we read it; but it is something mistaken: it is not the *τῆς θείας φύσεως*, 'the divine nature;' for God's nature is indivisible, and incommunicable; but it is spoken 'participative,' or *per analogiam*, 'partakers of a divine nature,' that is, of this new and godlike nature given to every person that serves God, whereby he is sanctified, and made the child of God, and framed into the likeness of Christ. The Greeks generally call this *χάρισμα*, 'a gracious gift,' an extraordinary superaddition to nature; not a single gift in order to single purposes, but a universal principle; and it remains on all good men during their lives, and after their death, and is that 'white stone' spoken of in the Revelation, 'and in it a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that hath it:'† and by this, God's sheep, at the day of judgment, shall be discerned from goats. If their spirits be presented to God pure and unblameable, this great *χάρισμα*, this talent, which God hath given to all Christians to improve in the banks of grace and religion, if they bring this to God increased and grown up to the fulness of the measure of Christ, (for it is Christ's Spirit; and as it is in us, it is called 'the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,'‡) then we shall be acknowleged for sons, and our adoption shall pass into an eternal inheritance in the portion of our elder brother.

* 2 Epist. i. 3. 4. † Apoc. ii. 17. ‡ Phil. i. 19.

I need not to apply this discourse: the very mystery itself is in the whole world the greatest engagement of our duty that is imaginable, by the way of instrument, and by the way of thankfulness.

Quisquis magna dedit, voluit sibi magna rependi;

"He that gives great things to us, ought to have great acknowlegements:"—and Seneca said concerning wise men, "That he that doth benefits to others, hides those benefits; as a man lays up great treasures in the earth, which he must never see with his eyes, unless a great occasion forces him to dig the graves, and produce that which he buried; but all the while the man was hugely rich, and he had the wealth of a great relation." So it is with God and us: for this huge benefit of the Spirit, which God gives us, is for our good deposited into our souls; not made for forms and ostentation, not to be looked on, or serve little ends; but growing in the secret of our souls, and swelling up to a treasure, making us in this world rich by title and relation; but it shall be produced in the great necessities of doomsday. In the mean time, if the fire be quenched, the fire of God's Spirit, God will kindle another in his anger that shall never be quenched: but if we entertain God's Spirit with our own purities, and employ it diligently, and serve it willingly (for God's Spirit is a loving Spirit), then we shall really be turned into spirits. Irenæus had a proverbial saying, *Perfecti sunt, qui tria sine querela Deo exhibent:* "They that present three things right to God, they are perfect;" that is, a chaste body, a righteous soul, and a holy spirit. And the event shall be this, which Maimonides expressed not amiss, though he did not at all understand the secret of this mystery; the soul of man in this life is *in potentia adesse spiritum*, "it is designed to be a spirit;" but in the world to come it shall be actually as very a spirit as an angel is. And this state is expressed by the Apostle calling it 'the earnest of the Spirit:' that is, here it is begun, and given as an antepast of glory, and a principle of grace; but then we shall have it *in plenitudine*.

——— regit idem spiritus artus
Orbe alio———

Here and there it is the same; but here we have the earnest, there the riches and the inheritance.

But then, if this be a new principle, and be given us in order to the actions of a holy life, we must take care that we receive not 'the Spirit of God in vain,' but remember that it is a new life: and as no man can pretend that a person is alive, that doth not always do the works of life; so it is certain no man hath the Spirit of God, but he that lives the life of grace, and doth the works of the Spirit, that is, 'in all holiness, and justice, and sobriety.'

Spiritus qui accedit animo, vel Dei est, vel dæmonis, said Tertullian: "Every man hath within him the Spirit of God or the spirit of the devil." The spirit of fornication is an unclean devil, and extremely contrary to the Spirit of God; and so is the spirit of malice or uncharitableness; for the Spirit of God is the spirit of love: for as by purities God's Spirit sanctifies the body, so by love he purifies the soul, and makes the soul grow into a spirit, into a divine nature. But God knows that even in Christian societies, we see the devils walk up and down every day and every hour; the devil of uncleanness, and the devil of drunkenness; the devil of malice, and the devil of rage; the spirit of filthy speaking, and the spirit of detraction; a proud spirit, and the spirit of rebellion: and yet all call "Christian." It is generally supposed that unclean spirits walk in the night, and so it used to be; 'for they that are drunk are drunk in the night,' said the Apostle. But Suidas tells of certain *empusæ* that used to appear at noon, at such times as the Greeks did celebrate the funerals of the dead: and at this day some of the Russians fear the noon-day devil, which appeareth like a mourning widow to reapers of hay and corn, and uses to break their arms and legs, unless they worship her. The prophet David speaketh of both kinds: 'Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; and,' *a ruina et dæmonio meridiano*, 'from the devil at noon, thou shalt be free.'* It were happy if we were so: but besides the solemn followers of the works of darkness, in the times and proper seasons of darkness, there are very many who act their scenes of darkness in the face

* Psal. xci. 5.

of the sun, in open defiance of God, and all laws, and all modesty. There is in such men the spirit of impudence, as well as of impiety. And yet I might have expressed it higher; for every habitual sin doth not only put us in the power of the devil, but turns us into his very nature: just as the Holy Ghost transforms us into the image of God.

Here, therefore, I have a greater argument to persuade you to holy living than Moses had to the sons of Israel. 'Behold, I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing;' so said Moses: but I add, that I have, on the stock of this Scripture, set before you the good Spirit and the bad, God and the devil: choose unto whose nature you will be likened, and into whose inheritance you will be adopted, and into whose possession you will enter. If you commit sin, 'you are of your father the devil,' ye are begot of his principles, and follow his pattern; and shall pass into his portion, when ye are led captive by him at his will; and remember what a sad thing it is to go into the portion of evil and accursed spirits, the sad and eternal portion of devils. But he that hath the Spirit of God, doth acknowlege God for his Father and his Lord, he despises the world, and hath no violent appetites for secular pleasures, and is dead to the desires of this life, and his hopes are spiritual, and God is his joy, and Christ is his pattern and support, and religion is his employment, and 'godliness is his gain:' and this man understands the things of God, and is ready to die for Christ, and fears nothing but to sin against God; and his will is filled with love, and it springs out in obedience to God, and in charity to his brother. And of such a man we cannot make judgment by his fortune, or by his acquaintances; by his circumstances, or by his adherences; for they are the appendages of a natural man: but 'the spiritual is judged of no man;' that is, the rare excellences that make him happy, do not yet make him illustrious, unless he will reckon virtue to be a great fortune, and holiness to be great wisdom, and God to be the best friend, and Christ the best relative, and the Spirit the hugest advantage, and heaven the greatest reward. He that knows how to value these things, may sit down and reckon the felicities of him that hath the Spirit of God.

The purpose of this discourse is this; that since the Spirit of

God is a new nature, and a new life put into us, we are thereby taught and enabled to serve God by a constant course of holy living, without the frequent returns and intervening of such actions, which men are pleased to call "sins of infirmity." Whosoever hath the Spirit of God, lives the life of grace. The Spirit of God rules in him, and is strong according to its age and abode, and allows not of those often sins which we think unavoidable, because we call them "natural infirmities."

'But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.' The state of sin is a state of death. The state of man under the law was a state of bondage and infirmity, as St. Paul largely describes him in the seventh chapter to the Romans: but he that hath the Spirit is made alive, and free and strong, and a conqueror over all the powers and violences of sin. Such a man resists temptations, falls not under the assault of sin, returns not to the sin which he last repented of, acts no more that error which brought him to shame and sorrow: but he that falls under a crime, to which he still hath a strong and vigorous inclination; he that acts his sin, and then curses it, and then is tempted, and then sins again, and then weeps again, and calls himself miserable, but still the enchantment hath confined him to that circle; this man hath not the Spirit: 'for where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty;' there is no such bondage, and a returning folly to the commands of sin. But because men deceive themselves with calling this bondage a pitiable and excusable infirmity, it will not be useless to consider the state of this question more particularly, lest men, from the state of a pretended infirmity, fall into a real death.

1. No great sin is a sin of infirmity, or excusable on that stock. But that I may be understood, we must know that every sin is, in some sense or other, a sin of infirmity. When a man is in the state of spiritual sickness or death, he is in a state of infirmity; for he is a wounded man, a prisoner, a slave, a sick man, weak in his judgment, and weak in his reasonings, impotent in his passions, of childish resolutions, great inconstancy, and his purposes untwist as easily as the rude contexture of uncombining cables in the violence of a northern tempest: and he that is thus in infirmity cannot be excused; for

it is the aggravation of the state of his sin; he is so infirm that he is in a state unable to do his duty. Such a man is a 'servant of sin,' a slave of the devil, a heir of corruption, absolutely under command: and every man is so, who resolves for ever to avoid such a sin, and yet for ever falls under it. For what can he be but a servant of sin, who fain would avoid it, but cannot? that is, he hath not the Spirit of God within him; Christ dwells not in his soul; for 'where the Son is, there is liberty:' and all that are in the Spirit, are the sons of God, and servants of righteousness, and therefore freed from sin. But there are also sins of infirmity which are single actions, intervening seldom, in little instances unavoidable, or through a faultless ignorance: such as these are always the allays of the life of the best men; and for these Christ hath paid, and they are never to be accounted to good men, save only to make them more wary and more humble. Now concerning these it is that I say, No great sin is a sin of excusable or unavoidable infirmity; because, whosoever hath received the Spirit of God, hath sufficient knowlege of his duty, and sufficient strengths of grace, and sufficient advertency of mind, to avoid such things as do great and apparent violence to piety and religion. No man can justly say, that it is a sin of infirmity that he was drunk: for there are but three causes of every sin; a fourth is not imaginable. 1. If ignorance cause it, the sin is as full of excuse as the ignorance was innocent. But no Christian can pretend this to drunkenness, to murder, to rebellion, to uncleanness: for what Christian is so uninstructed but that he knows adultery is a sin? 2. Want of observation is the cause of many indiscreet and foolish actions. Now at this gap many irregularities do enter and escape; because in the whole it is impossible for a man to be of so present a spirit, as to consider and reflect on every word and every thought. But it is, in this case, in God's laws otherwise than in man's; the great flies cannot pass through without observation, little ones do; and a man cannot be drunk, and never take notice of it; or tempt his neighbor's wife before he be aware: therefore, the less the instance is, the more likely is it to be a sin of infirmity: and yet, if it be never so little, if it be observed, then it ceases to be a sin of infirmity. 3. But, because great crimes

cannot pretend to pass undiscernibly, it follows that they must come in at the door of malice, that is, of want of grace, in the absence of the Spirit; they destroy wherever they come, and the man dies if they pass on him.

It is true there is flesh and blood in every regenerate man, but they do not both rule: the flesh is left to tempt, but not to prevail. And it were a strange condition, if both the godly and the ungodly were captives to sin, and infallibly should fall into temptation and death, without all difference, save only that the godly sins unwillingly, and the ungodly sins willingly. But if the same things be done by both, and God in both be dishonored, and their duty prevaricated, the pretended unwillingness is the sign of a greater and a baser slavery, and of a condition less to be endured: for the servitude which is against me is intolerable; but if I choose the state of a servant, I am free in my mind.

> ———Libertatis servaveris umbram,
> Si, quidquid jubeare, velis. Tot rebus iniquis
> Paruîmus victi: venia est hæc sola pudoris,
> Degenerisque metus, nil jam potuisse negari.*

Certain it is that such a person who fain would, but cannot choose but commit adultery or drunkenness, is the veriest slave to sin that can be imagined, and not at all freed by the Spirit, and by the liberty of the sons of God; and there is no other difference, but that the mistaken good man feels his slavery, and sees his chains and his fetters: but therefore it is certain that he is, because he sees himself to be, a slave. No man can be a servant of sin and a servant of righteousness at the same time: but every man that hath the Spirit of God, is a servant of righteousness; and therefore, whosoever find great sins to be unavoidable, are in a state of death and reprobation, as to the present, because they willingly or unwillingly (it matters not much whether of the two) are servants of sin.

2. Sins of infirmity, as they are small in their instance, so they put on their degree of excusableness only according to the weakness or infirmity of a man's understanding. So far as men (without their own fault) understand not their duty, or are pos-

* Lucan, iii. 146.

sessed with weakness of principles, or are destitute and void of discourse, or discerning powers, and acts; so far, if a sin creeps on them, it is as natural, and as free from a law, as is the action of a child: but if any thing else be mingled with it, if it proceed from any other principle, it is criminal, and not excused by our infirmity, because it is chosen; and a man's will hath no infirmity, but when it wants the grace of God, or is mastered with passions and sinful appetites: and that infirmity is the state of unregeneration.

3. The violence or strength of a temptation is not sufficient to excuse an action, or to make it accountable on the stock of a pitiable and innocent infirmity, if it leaves the understanding still able to judge; because a temptation cannot have any proper strengths but from ourselves; and because we have in us a principle of baseness, which this temptation meets, and only persuades me to act, because I love it. Joseph met with a temptation as violent and as strong as any man; and it is certain there are not many Christians but would fall under it, and call it a sin of infirmity, since they have been taught so to abuse themselves, by sewing fig-leaves before their nakedness: but because Joseph had a strength of God within him, the strength of chastity, therefore it could not at all prevail on him. Some men cannot by any art of hell be tempted to be drunk; others can no more resist an invitation to such a meeting, than they can refuse to die if a dagger were drunk with their heart-blood, because their evil habits made them weak on that part. And some man, that is fortified against revenge, it may be, will certainly fall under a temptation to uncleanness: for every temptation is great or small according as the man is; and a good word will certainly lead some men to an action of folly, while another will not think ten thousand pounds a considerable argument to make him tell one single lie against his duty or his conscience.

4. No habitual sin, that is, no sin that returns constantly or frequently; that is repented of and committed again, and still repented of, and then again committed; no such sin is excusable with a pretence of infirmity: because that sin is certainly noted, and certainly condemned, and therefore returns, not because of the weakness of nature, but the weakness of

grace: the principle of this is an evil spirit, an habitual aversation from God, a dominion and empire of sin. And as no man, for his inclinations and aptness to the sins of the flesh, is to be called carnal, if he corrects his inclinations and turns them into virtues; so no man can be called spiritual for his good wishes and apt inclinations to goodness, if these inclinations pass not into acts, and these acts into habits and holy customs, and walkings and conversation with God. But as natural concupiscence corrected becomes the matter of virtue, so these good inclinations and condemnings of our sin, if they be ineffective, and end in sinful actions, are the perfect signs of a reprobate and unregenerated state.

The sum is this: an animal man, a man under the law, a carnal man (for as to this they are all one), is sold under sin, he is a servant of corruption, he falls frequently into the same sin to which he is tempted, he commends the law, he consents to it that it is good, he does not commend sin, he does some little things against it; but they are weak and imperfect, his lust is stronger, his passions violent and unmortified, his habits vicious, his customs sinful, and he lives in the regions of sin, and dies and enters into its portion. But a spiritual man, a man that is in a state of grace, who is born anew of the Spirit, that is regenerate by the Spirit of Christ, he is led by the Spirit, he lives in the Spirit, he does the works of God cheerfully, habitually, vigorously; and although he sometimes slips, yet it is but seldom, it is in small instances; his life is such, as he cannot pretend to be justified by works and merit, but by mercy and the faith of Jesus Christ; yet he never sins great sins; if he does, he is for that present fallen from God's favor; and though possibly he may recover (and the smaller or seldomer the sin is, the sooner may be his restitution); yet for the present, I say, he is out of God's favor. But he that remains in the grace of God, sins not by any deliberate, consultive, knowing act: he is incident to such a surprise as may consist with the weakness and judgment of a good man; but whatsoever is, or must be considered, if it cannot pass without consideration, it cannot pass without sin, and therefore cannot enter on him while he remains in that state. For 'he that is in Christ, in him the body is dead by reason of sin.' And the

gospel did not differ from the law, but that the gospel gives grace and strength to do whatsoever it commands, which the law did not; and the greatness of the promise of eternal life is such an argument to them that consider it, that it must needs be of force sufficient to persuade a man to use all his faculties and all his strength, that he may obtain it. God exacted all on this stock; God knew this could do every thing: *Nihil non in hoc præsumpsit Deus*, said one. This will make a satyr chaste, and Silenus to be sober, and Dives to be charitable, and Simon Magus himself to despise reputation, and Saul to turn from a persecutor to an Apostle. For since God hath given us reason to choose, and a promise to exchange for our temperance and faith, and charity and justice; for these, I say, happiness, exceeding great happiness, that we shall be kings, that we shall reign with God, with Christ, with all the holy angels for ever, in felicity so great that we have not now capacities to understand it, our heart is not big enough to think it; there cannot in the world be a greater inducement to engage us, a greater argument to oblige us to do our duty. God hath not in heaven a bigger argument; it is not possible any thing in the world should be bigger; which because the Spirit of God hath revealed to us, if by this strength of his we walk in his ways, and be ingrafted into his stock, and bring forth his fruits, 'the fruits of the Spirit,'—then 'we are in Christ,' and 'Christ in us,'—then 'we walk in the Spirit,' and 'the Spirit dwells in us;' and our portion shall be there, where 'Christ by the Spirit maketh intercession for us,' that is, at the right hand of his Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON II.

EXODUS, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 5, 6.

PART I.

A MAN would not think it necessary that a commonwealth should hire orators to dissuade men from running into houses infected by the plague; yet God has hired servants to fight against sin, and advocates to plead against it; has made laws against it, and established a peculiar order of men to give an alarm at every approach of it. God hath edged sin about with thorns; and sin of itself too brings thorns, &c. Moreover, it moves God first to jealousy, which takes off his friendship towards us; and then to anger, which makes him a resolved enemy: it also brings evil, not only on ourselves, but on our children, relatives, and posterity. If all this will not deter a man from sin, there is no hope left for his recovery; but he must sink under the strokes of a jealous God.

God is a jealous God.—That is the first and great stroke he aims against sin. He speaks after the manner of men; and in this we know that he is jealous, suspicious, inquisitive, and, lastly, implacable. 1. God is pleased to represent himself as a person very suspicious both in respect of persons and things, for which we give him cause enough: this fully shown. 2. And therefore he is inquisitive: he looks for that which he would fain never find, and so sets spies on us: this enlarged on and illustrated. These spies, the blessed angels and the accursed devils, good and bad men, our own conscience, the eye of Heaven, and God himself, all watch lest we rob God of his

honor, and ourselves of our hopes; for he hath chosen so to get his own glory, as may best consist with our felicity. But, 3. his jealousy hath a sadder effect than this: all this is for mercy; but if we provoke his jealousy, if he finds us fixed in our spiritual transgressions, he is implacable, that is, he is angry with us to eternity, unless we return in time: and if we do, it may be that he will not be appeased in all instances; when he forgives he makes some reservations; he will punish us in our persons or estate, in our bodies or our children; for *God visits the sins of the fathers on the children.* This is the second great stroke he aims against sin, and is now to be considered.

That God doth so is certain, because he saith he doth: and that this is just in him, is also as certain, because he doth it. But since God is pleased to speak after the manner of men, it may consist with our duty to inquire into the equity of this proceeding.

1. No man is made a sinner by the fault of another man, without his own consent; for to every one God gives his choice, and sets life and death before all the sons of Adam; and therefore this death is not a consequence to any sin but our own. And it is not said that *sin* passed on all men, but *death:* the death brought in by sin was nothing superinduced to man; man was only reduced to his own natural condition, from which, before Adam's fall, he stood exempted by supernatural favor: also, before any man died, Christ was promised, by whom death was to lose his sting, and cease to be an evil; and it does cease to be so to all who follow Christ. Hence the divine justice is vindicated in this matter. The material part of the evil came on us from our first father; but the formality of it, the sting and the curse, is only from ourselves.

2. For the fault of others many may become miserable; even all, or any of those whose relation is such to the sinner, that he in any sense may, by such inflictions, be punished or oppressed: in this case the influence is perceived; the sin is

infectious, not only in example, but in punishment. With respect to this, it is to be shown, 1. in what instances it is so: 2. for what reasons it is justly so: 3. in what degrees, and in what cases, it is so: 4. what remedies there are for this evil.

I. It is so in kingdoms, in churches, in families, in political, artificial, and even in accidental societies. This instanced in the case of the people whom David numbered; of the Gibeonites, Joshua, and Saul; in that of Saul's sons; of Ahab and his sons; of Solomon and the son of Bathsheba; of the family of Eli; in that of Cham and his posterity; of Amalek and his nation; and above all, in that of the Jews, who put to death the Lord of life: this dreadful example enlarged on. With regard to churches, the state of the seven churches in Asia is instanced. In addition, it may be remarked, that there is even danger to those who are in evil company, in suspected places, in the society and fellowship of wicked men: instances given.

II. The next consideration is, why this is so, and why it is justly so. First, then, between kings and their people, parents and their children, there is so great a necessitude and natural intercourse, &c. that the latter are by God and the laws of nature reckoned as the goods and blessings of the former: this enlarged on; and the severity of punishment when these our goods and blessings are injured or taken away from us. 2. As this is a punishment to us, so it is not unjust to them, though they be innocent; since the calamities of the world are incident to all, even the most godly persons: this enlarged on: moreover, they themselves may be sanctified by sorrows, and purified by affliction, and receive the blessing of it, &c. 3. God hath many ends of providence to serve in this dispensation of his judgments: he expresses the highest indignation against sin, and makes his examples lasting and most efficacious: it arrests the spirits of men, and restrains their looseness, &c. it serves to satisfy the fearfulness of such persons as think the wicked

prosperous, and the proud happy: this explained and enlarged on.

III. The third consideration is, in what degree, and in what cases, this is usual, or to be expected. In the text it is instanced in the worship of images: and he who is so jealous of his honor in this particular, is also very curious of it in all others; and though the children are more solemnly threatened with punishment in this sin, yet we find it inflicted indifferently in any other great one.

One thing is strictly to be observed, that the wrath of God does not, as some erroneously have taught, descend only on children who imitate their fathers' wickedness: this is expressly against the text, and the examples of the thing. God afflicts good children of evil parents for the sins of their fathers. And this hath been observed even by wise men among the heathens: instances cited: and this was so in the case of Jonathan, who lost the throne of Israel and his life, on account of the sins of Saul. What has been said in vindication of divine justice need not be repeated. But so it is in the world. The posterity of a traitor become dishonorable and beggars. The subject enlarged on: the natural effects of sin, in the constitution of the body entailed on children, considered. The great preservative which this ought to be against every species of vice. Concluding exhortations.

PART II.

IV. Fourth consideration; namely, what remedies there are for sons to cut off this entail of curses; and whether, or by what means, it is possible for them to prevent the being punished for the sins of their fathers. And since this matter is so perplexed and intricate, it cannot but be thought, that there are ways left, not only to vindicate God's justice, but to reconcile man's condition to the possibilities of God's usual mercies.

The first means to cut off the entail of wrath from a family, is, for the sons to disavow those actions of impiety in which their fathers were deeply guilty. A son comes to inherit his father's wickedness in three ways: 1. by approving, or any ways consenting to his father's sin, as by speaking of it without shame, pleasing himself in the story, or being apt to do the like: 2. by imitation and direct practice; when the curse is likely to come with accumulation: 3. by receiving and enjoying the purchases of his father's rapine and oppression, &c.

Now, in all these cases, the rule holds. If the son inherits the sin, he cannot call it unjust if he inherit the punishment. But to break the fatal chain of God's anger, a son is tied in all these cases to disavow his father's crime. But because the cases are several, he must also in several manners do it.

1. Every man is bound not to glory in, or to speak honorably of, the powerful and unjust actions of his ancestors: this topic enlarged on. Children are bound to pray to God to sanctify, to cure, to forgive their parents: this also enlarged on.

2. Those curses which descend from the fathers to the children by imitation, are to be cut off by special and personal repentance and prayer, as being a state directly opposite to that which procured the curse: but it must be observed, that no merely public or imaginative disavowal, no ceremonial and pompous recission of the fathers' crimes, can avail to interrupt the succession of the curse, if the children do secretly practise or approve, what they in pretence or ceremony disavow: this illustrated in the case of the Pharisees: *Wo unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.*

3. But concerning the third case there is more difficulty. Those persons that inherit their fathers' sins by possessing the price of their fathers' souls, namely, by enjoying their unjust possessions, may quit the inheritance of the curse if they quit the purchase of the sin; namely, if they pay their fathers'

debts of justice, and of oppression. Still some measures are to be observed in this case; nor is every man bound to give up all the land which his ancestors may have unjustly usurped. But though children of far-removed lines are not thus bound, yet others are, for various reasons. 1. Sons are tied to restore what their fathers usurped, or to make recompense for it, if the case be visible and notorious, and the oppressed party demands it: reason of this given. 2. Though by all the solemnities of law the unjust purchase be established, and in conscience the heirs may continue to enjoy it without a new sin; yet, if we see a curse descending on the family for sake of the old oppression, or if we reasonably suspect such to be the case, then, by making all possible restitution, we may certainly remove the curse: this topic enlarged on.

The sum is this: as kingdoms and churches use to expiate the faults of others by acts of justice and censure, so the heirs and sons of families are to remove the curse descending from their fathers' lines on their house, by acts; by disavowal; by praying for pardon; by humbling themselves; by renouncing the example; by quitting all affection for the crime; by not imitating the kind of actions; and, lastly, by refusing to rejoice in the ungodly possessions.

But, secondly, after all this, cases occur, in which we find that innocent sons are punished. How may they prevent, or take off, the curse? this considered.

1. The pious children of evil parents are to stand firm on the confidence of divine grace and mercy; and on that persuasion to begin to work on a new stock: for it is as certain that a man may derive a blessing on his posterity, as that his parents could transmit a curse: by this he shall do more than escape the punishment of his father's follies: this enlarged on and illustrated.

2. But if great impiety and clamorous wickedness have stained the honor of a family, and discomposed its title to the

divine mercies, it is not an ordinary piety that can restore this family: an ordinary, even course of life, full of goodness and innocence, will secure every single person in his own eternal interests; but that piety, which shall be a spring of blessings, and communicative to others, &c. must be very great and excellent: this topic enlarged on.

3. It is of great use for the securing of families, that every master of one order his life so, that his piety and virtue be as communicative as possible; namely, that he secure the religion of his family by a severe supravision and animadversion, and by cutting of all those unprofitable branches that injure the tree, &c.

4. If a curse be feared to descend on a family, let the descendants perform some heroical act of piety. Thus, if there should happen to be one martyr in it, this might reconcile the whole to God. Instance of Phineas, of the sons of Rechab, &c.

One farther piece of advice given to all parents and fathers of families, from whose loins a blessing, or a curse, may proceed; that they be particular in the matter of repentance; and after this, that they be fervent, hearty, and continual in prayer for their children, ever remembering, when they beg a blessing, that God hath put much into their hands. They that can truly bring down a blessing on their families are such only as lead a blessed life, &c. Conclusion.

SERMON II.

THE DESCENDING AND ENTAILED CURSE CUT OFF.

EXODUS, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 5, 6.

I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

PART I.

It is not necessary that a commonwealth should give pensions to orators, to dissuade men from running into houses infected with the plague, or to intreat them to be out of love with violent torments, or to create in men evil opinions concerning famine or painful deaths: every man hath a sufficient stock of self-love, on the strength of which he hath entertained principles strong enough to secure himself against voluntary mischiefs, and from running into states of death and violence. A man would think that this I have now said, were in all cases certainly true; and I would to God it were; for that which is the greatest evil, that which makes all evils, that which turns good into evil, and every natural evil into a greater sorrow, and makes that sorrow lasting and perpetual; that which sharpens the edge of swords, and makes agues to be fevers, and fevers to turn into plagues; that which puts stings into every fly, and uneasiness to every trifling accident, and strings every whip

with scorpions,—you know I must needs mean sin; that evil men suffer patiently, and choose willingly, and run after it greedily, and will not suffer themselves to be divorced from it: and therefore God hath hired servants to fight against this evil; he hath set angels with fiery swords to drive us from it, he hath employed advocates to plead against it, he hath made laws and decrees against it, he hath despatched prophets to warn us of it, and hath established an order of men, men of his own family, and who are fed at his own charges, I mean the whole order of the clergy, whose office is like watchmen, to give an alarm at every approach of sin, with as much affrightment as if an enemy were near, or the sea broke in on the flat country; and all this only to persuade men not to be extremely miserable, for nothing, for vanity, for a trouble, for a disease: for some sins naturally are diseases, and all others are natural nothings, mere privations or imperfections, contrary to goodness, to felicity, to God himself. And yet God hath hedged sin round about with thorns, and sin of itself too brings thorns; and it abuses a man in all his capacities, and it places poison in all those seats and receptions where he could possibly entertain happiness: for if sin pretend to please the sense, it doth first abuse it shamefully, and then humors it: it can only feed an imposture; no natural, reasonable, and perfective appetite: and besides its own essential appendages and properties, things are so ordered, that a fire is kindled round about us, and every thing within us, above, below us, and on every side of us, is an argument against, and an enemy to sin: and, for its single pretence, that it comes to please one of the senses, one of those faculties which are in us, the same they are in a cow, it hath an evil so communicative, that it doth not only work like poison, to the dissolution of soul and body, but it is a sickness like the plague, it infects all our houses, and corrupts the air and the very breath of heaven: for it moves God first to jealousy, and that takes off his friendship and kindness towards us; and then to anger, and that makes him a resolved enemy; and it brings evil not only on ourselves, but on all our relatives, on ourselves and our children, even the children of our nephews, *ad natos natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis*,* to the third and fourth generation.

* Virg. Æn. iii. 98.

And therefore if a man should despise the eye or sword of man, if he sins, he is to contest with the jealousy of a provoked God; if he doth not regard himself, let him pity his pretty children: if he be angry, and hates all that he sees, and is not solicitous for his children, yet let him pity the generations which are yet unborn: let him not bring a curse on his whole family, and suffer his name to rot in curses and dishonors; let not his memory remain polluted with an eternal stain. If all this will not deter a man from sin, there is no instrument left for that man's virtue, no hopes of his felicity, no recovery of his sorrows and sicknesses; but he must sink under the strokes of a jealous God into the dishonor of eternal ages, and the groanings of a never-ceasing sorrow.

'God is a jealous God.'—That is the first and great stroke he strikes against sin; he speaks after the manner of men; and, in so speaking, we know that he is jealous,—is suspicious,—he is inquisitive,—he is implacable. 1. God is pleased to represent himself a person very suspicious, both in respect of persons and things. For our persons we give him cause enough; for we are sinners from our mother's womb: we make solemn vows, and break them instantly; we cry for pardon, and still renew the sin; we desire God to try us once more, and we provoke him ten times farther; we use the means of grace to cure us, and we turn them into vices and opportunities of sin; we curse our sins, and yet long for them extremely; we renounce them publicly, and yet send for them in private, and show them kindness; we leave little offences, but our faith and our charity are not strong enough to master great ones; and sometimes we are shamed out of great ones, but yet entertain little ones; or if we disclaim both, yet we love to remember them, and delight in their past actions, and bring them home to us, at least by fiction of imagination, and we love to be betrayed into them: we would fain have things so ordered by chance or power, that it may seem necessary to sin, or that it may become excusable, and dressed fitly for our own circumstances; and for ever we long after the fleshpots of Egypt, the garlic and the onions; and we do so little esteem manna, the food of angels; we so loathe the bread of heaven;—that any temptation will make us return to our fetters and our bondage. And if we do not tempt

ourselves, yet we do not resist a temptation; or if we pray against it, we desire not to be heard; and if we be assisted, yet we will not work together with those assistances: so that unless we be forced, nothing will be done. We are so willing to perish, and so unwilling to be saved, that we minister to God reason enough to suspect us, and therefore it is no wonder that God is jealous of us. We keep company with harlots and polluted persons; we are kind to all God's enemies, and love that which he hates: how can it be otherwise but that we should be suspected? Let us make our best of it, and see if we can recover the good opinion of God; for as yet we are but suspected persons. 2. And therefore God is inquisitive; he looks for that which he fain would never find: God sets spies on us; he looks on us himself through the curtains of a cloud, and he sends angels to espy us in all our ways, and permits the devil to winnow us and to accuse us, and erects a tribunal and witnesses in our own consciences, and he cannot want information concerning our smallest irregularities. Sometimes the devil accuses: but he sometimes accuses us falsely, either maliciously or ignorantly, and we stand upright in that particular by innocence; and sometimes by penitence; and all this while our conscience is our friend. Sometimes our conscience does accuse us unto God; and then we stand convicted by our own judgment. Sometimes, if our conscience acquit us, yet we are not thereby justified: for, as Moses accused the Jews, so do Christ and his Apostles accuse us, not in their persons, but by their works and by their words, by the thing itself, by confronting the laws of Christ and our practices. Sometimes the angels, who are the observers of all our works, carry up sad tidings to the court of heaven against us. Thus two angels were the informers against Sodom: but yet these were the last; for before that time the cry of their iniquity had sounded loud and sadly in heaven. And all this is the direct and proper effect of his jealousy, which sets spies on all the actions, and watches the circumstances, and tells the steps, and attends the business, the recreations, the publications, and retirements of every man, and will not suffer a thought to wander but he uses means to correct its error, and to reduce it to himself. For he that created us, and daily feeds us; he that intreats us to be happy with an im-

portunity so passionate, as if not we, but himself were to receive the favor; he that would part with his only Son from his bosom and the embraces of eternity, and give him over to a shameful and cursed death for us, cannot but be supposed to love us with a great love, and to own us with an intire title, and therefore that he would fain secure us to himself with an undivided passion. And it cannot but be infinitely reasonable: for to whom else should any of us belong but to God? Did the world create us? or did lust ever do us any good? Did Satan ever suffer one stripe for our advantage? Does not he study all the ways to ruin us? Do the sun or the stars preserve us alive? or do we get understanding from the angels? Did ever any joint of our body knit, or our heart ever keep one true minute of a pulse, without God? Had not we been either nothing, or worse, that is, infinitely, eternally miserable, but that God made us capable, and then pursued us with arts and devices of great mercy to force us to be happy? Great reason therefore there is that God should be jealous lest we take any of our duty from him, who hath so strangely deserved it all, and give it to a creature, or to our enemy, who cannot be capable of any. But, however, it will concern us with much caution to observe our own ways, since 'we are made a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men.' God hath set so many spies on us, the blessed angels and the accursed devils, good men and bad men, the eye of heaven, and eye of that eye, God himself,—all watching lest we rob God of his honor, and ourselves of our hopes. For by this prime intention he hath chosen so to get his own glory, as may best consist with our felicity: his great design is to be glorified in our being saved. 3. God's jealousy hath a sadder effect than all this. For all this is for mercy; but if we provoke this jealousy, if he finds us in our spiritual whoredoms, he is implacable, that is, he is angry with us to eternity, unless we return in time; and if we do, it may be, he will not be appeased in all instances; and when he forgives us, he will make some reserves of his wrath; he will punish our persons or our estate, he will chastise us at home or abroad, in our bodies or in our children; for he will visit our sins on our children from generation to generation: and if they be made miserable for our sins, they are unhappy in such parents; but we bear the curse and

the anger of God, even while they bear his rod. 'God visits the sins of the fathers on the children.' That is the second great stroke he strikes against sin, and is now to be considered.

That God doth so is certain, because he saith he doth: and that this is just in him so to do, is also as certain therefore, because he doth it: for as his laws are our measures, so his actions and his own will are his own measures. He that hath right over all things and all persons, cannot do wrong to any thing. He that is essentially just (and there could be no such thing as justice, or justice itself could not be good, if it did not derive from him), it is impossible for him to be unjust. But since God is pleased to speak after the manner of men, it may well consist with our duty to inquire into those manners of consideration, whereby we may understand the equity of God in this proceeding, and to be instructed also in our own danger if we persevere in sin.

1. No man is made a sinner by the fault of another man without his own consent: for to every one God gives his choice, and sets life and death before every of the sons of Adam; and therefore, this death is not a consequent to any sin but our own. In this sense it is true, that if 'the fathers eat sour grapes, the children's teeth shall not be set on edge:' and therefore the sin of Adam, which was derived to all the world, did not bring the world to any other death but temporal, by the intermedial stages of sickness and temporal infelicities. And it is not said that 'sin passed on all men,' but 'death;' and that also no otherwise but ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον, 'inasmuch as all men have sinned;' as they have followed the steps of their father, so they are partakers of this death. And therefore, it is very remarkable, that death brought in by sin was nothing superinduced to man; man only was reduced to his own natural condition, from which before Adam's fall he stood exempted by supernatural favor: and therefore, although the taking away that extraordinary grace or privilege was a punishment; yet the suffering the natural death was directly none, but a condition of his creation, natural, and therefore not primarily evil; but, if not good, yet at least indifferent. And the truth and purpose of this observation will extend itself, if we observe, that before any man died, Christ was promised, by whom death was to

lose its sting, by whom death did cease to be an evil, and was, or might be, if we do belong to Christ, a state of advantage. So that we, by occasion of Adam's sin, being returned to our natural certainty of dying, do still, even in this very particular, stand between the blessing and the cursing. If we follow Christ, death is our friend: if we imitate the prevarication of Adam, then death becomes an evil; the condition of our nature becomes the punishment of our own sin, not of Adam's: for although his sin brought death in, yet it is only our sin that makes death to be evil. And I desire this to be observed, because it is of great use in vindicating the divine justice in the matter of this question. The material part of the evil came from our father on us; but the formality of it, the sting and the curse, is only by ourselves.

2. For the fault of others many may become miserable, even all or any of those whose relation is such to the sinner, that he in any sense may, by such inflictions, be punished, execrable, or oppressed. Indeed it were strange, if, when a plague were in Ethiopia, the Athenians should be infected; or if the house of Pericles were visited, Thucydides should die for it. For although there are some evils which (as Plutarch saith) are *ansis et propagationibus prædita, incredibili celeritate in longinquum penetrantia*, such which can dart evil influences, as porcupines do their quills; yet as at so great distances the knowlege of any confederate events must needs be uncertain; so it is also useless, because we neither can join their causes, nor their circumstances, nor their accidents, into any neighborhood of conjunction. Relations are seldom noted at such distances; and if they were, it is certain so many accidents will intervene, that will outweigh the efficacy of such relations, that by any so far distant events we cannot be instructed in any duty, nor understand ourselves reproved for any fault. But when the relation is nearer, and is joined under such a head and common cause, that the influence is perceived, and the parts of it do usually communicate in benefit, notice, or infelicity,—especially if they relate to each other as superior and inferior,—then it is certain the sin is infectious; I mean, not only in example, but also in punishment.

And of this I shall show, 1. in what instances it is so:

2. for what reasons it is so, and justly so: 3. in what degree, and in what cases, it is so: 4. what remedies there are for this evil.

I. It is so in kingdoms, in churches, in families, in political, artificial, and even in accidental societies.

When David numbered the people, God was angry with him; but he punished the people for the crime; seventy thousand men died of the plague. And when God gave to David the choice of three plagues, he chose that of the pestilence, in which the meanest of the people, and such which have the least society with the acts and crimes of kings, are most commonly devoured; whilst the powerful and sinning persons, by arts of physic, and flight, by provisions of nature, and accidents, are more commonly secured. But the story of the kings of Israel hath furnished us with an example fitted with all the stranger circumstances in this question. Joshua had sworn to the Gibeonites, who had craftily secured their lives by exchanging it for their liberties: almost five hundred years after, Saul, in zeal to the men of Israel and Judah, slew many of them. After this Saul dies, and no question was made of it: but, in the days of David, there was a famine in the land three years together; and God, being inquired of, said, it was because of Saul's killing the Gibeonites.* What had the people to do with their king's fault; or, at least, the people of David with the fault of Saul? That we shall see anon. But see the way that was appointed to expiate the crime and the calamity. David took seven of Saul's sons, and hung them up against the sun; and after that, God was intreated for the land. The story observes one circumstance more; that, for the kindness of Jonathan, David spared Mephibosheth. Now this story doth not only instance in kingdoms, but in families too. The father's fault is punished on the sons of the family, and the king's fault on the people of his land; even after the death of the king, after the death of the father. Thus God visited the sin of Ahab, partly on himself, partly on his sons: 'I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil on his house.'† Thus did God slay the child of Bathsheba for

* 2 Sam. xxi. 1. † 1 Kings xxi. 29.

the sin of his father David: and the whole family of Eli, all his kindred of the nearer lines, were thrust from the priesthood, and a curse made to descend on his children for many ages, 'that all the males should die young, and in the flower of their youth.' The boldness and impiety of Cham made his posterity to be accursed, and brought slavery into the world. Because Amalek fought with the sons of Israel at Rephidim, God took up a quarrel against the nation for ever. And, above all examples, is that of the Jews, who put to death the Lord of life, and made their nation to be an anathema for ever, until the day of restitution: 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' If we shed innocent blood, if we provoke God to wrath, if we oppress the poor, if we 'crucify the Lord of life again, and put him to an open shame,' the wrath of God will be on us and on our children, to make us a cursed family; and we are the sinners, to be the stock and original of the curse; the pedigree of the misery shall derive from us.

This last instance went farther than the other of families and kingdoms: for not only the single families of the Jews were made miserable for their fathers' murdering the Lord of life, nor also was the nation alone extinguished for the sins of their rulers; but the religion was removed; it ceased to be God's people; the synagogue was rejected, and her veil rent, and her privacies dismantled; and the Gentiles were made to be God's people, when the Jews' inclosure was disparked. I need not farther to instance this proposition in the case of national churches; though it is a sad calamity that is fallen on all the seven churches of Asia, to whom the Spirit of God wrote seven epistles by St. John; and almost all the churches of Africa, where Christ was worshipped, and now Mahomet is thrust in substitution, and the people are servants, and the religion is extinguished; or, where it remains, it shines like the moon in an eclipse, or like the least spark of the Pleiades, seen but seldom, and that rather shining like a glow-worm than a taper enkindled with a beam of the Sun of Righteousness. I shall add no more instances to verify the truth of this, save only I shall observe to you, that even there is danger in being in evil company, in suspected places, in the civil societies and fellowship of wicked men.

——— Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgarit arcanæ, sub isdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum
Solvat phaselum. Sæpe Diespiter
Neglectus incesto addidit integrum.*

And it happened to the mariners who carried Jonah, to be in danger with a horrid storm, because Jonah was there, who had sinned against the Lord. Many times the sin of one man is punished by the falling of a house or wall on him, and then all the family are like to be crushed with the same ruin: so dangerous, so pestilential, so infectious a thing is sin, that it scatters the poison of its breath to all the neighborhood, and makes that the man ought to be avoided like a person infected with a plague.

II. Next I am to consider, why this is so, and why it is justly so. To this I answer, 1. Between kings and their people, parents and their children, there is so great a necessitude, propriety, and intercourse of nature, dominion, right, and possession,—that they are by God and the laws of nations reckoned as their goods and their blessings. 'The honor of a king is in the multitude of his people;' and, 'Children are a gift that cometh of the Lord,' and, 'Happy is that man that hath his quiver full of them;' and, 'Lo thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord; his wife shall be like the fruitful vine by the walls of his house, his children like olive-branches round about his table.' Now if children be a blessing, then to take them away in anger is a curse: and if the loss of flocks and herds, the burning of houses, the blasting of fields, be a curse; how much greater is it to lose our children, and to see God slay them before our eyes, in hatred to our persons, and detestation and loathing of our baseness? When Job's messengers told him the sad stories of fire from heaven, the burning his sheep, and that the Sabeans had driven his oxen away, and the Chaldeans had stolen his camels; these were sad arrests to his troubled spirit: but it was reserved as the last blow of that sad execution, that the ruins of a house had crushed his sons and daughters to their graves. Sons and daughters are greater

* Hor. Od. iii. 2. 26.

blessings than sheep and oxen: they are not servants of profit, as sheep are, but they secure greater ends of blessing; they preserve your names; they are so many titles of provision and providence; every new child is a new title of God's care of that family: they serve the ends of honor, of commonwealths and kingdoms; they are images of our souls, and images of God, and therefore are great blessings; and, by consequence, they are great riches, though they are not to be sold for money; and surely he that hath a cabinet of valuable jewels, will think himself rich, though he never sells them. 'Doth God take care for oxen?' said our blessed Saviour: much more for you: yea, all and every one of your children are of more value than many oxen. When therefore God, for your sins, strikes them with crookedness, with deformity, with foolishness, with impertinent and caitiff spirits, with hasty or sudden deaths; it is a greater curse to you than to lose whole herds of cattle, of which, it is certain, most men would be very sensible. They are our goods; they are our blessings from God; therefore we are stricken when for our sakes they die. Therefore, we may properly be punished by evils happening to our relatives.

2. But as this is a punishment to us, so it is not unjust as to them, though they be innocent. For all the calamities of this life are incident to the most godly persons in the world: and since the King of heaven and earth was made a man of sorrows, it cannot be called unjust or intolerable, that innocent persons should be pressed with temporal infelicities; only in such cases we must distinguish the misery from the punishment: for that all the world dies is a punishment of Adam's sin; but it is no evil to those single persons that 'die in the Lord,' for they are blessed in their death. Jonathan was killed the same day with his father the king; and this was a punishment to Saul indeed, but to Jonathan it was a blessing: for since God had appointed the kingdom to his neighbor, it was more honorable for him to die fighting the Lord's battle, than to live and see himself the lasting testimony of God's curse on his father, who lost the kingdom from his family by his obedience. That death is a blessing, which ends an honorable and prevents an inglorious life. And our children, it may be, shall be sanctified by a sorrow, and purified by the power of affliction, and they shall,

receive the blessing of it; but it is to the fathers a curse, who shall wound their own hearts with sorrow, and cover their heads with a robe of shame, for bringing so great evil on their house.

3. God hath many ends of providence to serve in this dispensation of his judgments. 1. He expresses the highest indignation against sin, and makes his examples lasting, communicative, and of great effect; it is a little image of hell; and we shall the less wonder that God with the pains of eternity punishes the sins of a time, when with our eyes we see him punish a transient action with a lasting judgment. 2. It arrests the spirits of men, and surprises their loosenesses, and restrains their gaiety, when we observe that the judgments of God find us out in all relations, and turn our comforts into sadness, and make our families the scene of sorrows, and we can escape him no where; and by sin are made obnoxious, not alone to personal judgments, but are made like the fountains of the Dead Sea, springs of the lake of Sodom; instead of refreshing our families with blessings, we leave them brimstone and drought, and poison, and an evil name, and the wrath of God, and a treasure of wrath, and their fathers' sins for their portion and inheritance. Naturalists say, that when the leading goats in the Greek islands have taken an *eryngus*, or sea holly, into their mouths, all the herd will stand still, till the herdsman comes and forces it out, as apprehending the evil that will come to them all, if any of them, especially their principals, taste an unwholesome plant. And, indeed, it is of a general concernment, that the master of a family, or the prince of a people, from whom, as from a fountain, many issues do derive on their relatives, should be springs of health, and sanctity, and blessing. It is a great right and propriety that a king hath in his people, or a father in his children, that even their sins can do these a mischief, not only by a direct violence, but by the execution of God's wrath. God hath made strange bands and vessels, or channels of communication between them, when even the anger of God shall be conveyed by the conduits of such relations. That would be considered. It binds them nearer than our new doctrine will endure. But it also binds us to pray for them, and for their holiness, and good govern-

ment, as earnestly as he would to be delivered from death, or sickness, or poverty, or war, or the wrath of God in any instance. 3. This also will satisfy the fearfulness of such persons, who think the evil prosperous, and call the proud happy. No man can be called happy till he be dead; nor then neither, if he lived viciously. Look how God handles him in his children, in his family, in his grandchildren; and as it tells that generation, which sees the judgment, that God was all the while angry with him; so it supports the spirits of men in the interval, and entertains them with the expectation of a certain hope: for if I do not live to see his sin punished, yet his posterity may find themselves accursed, and feel their fathers' sins in their own calamity: and the expectation or belief of that may relieve my oppression, and ease my sorrows, while I know that God will bear my injury in a lasting record, and, when I have forgot it, will bring it forth to judgment. The Athenians were highly pleased when they saw honors done to the posterity of Cimon, a good man and a rare citizen, but murdered for being wise and virtuous: and when at the same time they saw a decree of banishment pass against the children of Lacharis and Aristo, they laid their hands on their mouths, and with silence did admire the justice of the Power above.

The sum of this is, that, in sending evils on the posterity of evil men, God serves many ends of providence, some of wisdom, some of mercy, some of justice, and contradicts none: for the evil of the innocent son is the father's punishment on the stock of his sin, and his relation; but the sad accident happens to the son, on the score of nature, and many ends of providence and mercy. To which I add, that if any, even the greatest temporal evil, may fall on a man, as blindness did on the blind man in the gospel, when 'neither he nor his parents have sinned,' much more may it do so, when his parents have, though he have not. For there is a nearer or more visible commensuration of justice between the parent's sin and the son's sickness, than between the evil of the son and the innocence of the father and son together. The dispensation therefore is righteous and severe.

III. I am now to consider in what degree and in what cases this is usual, or to be expected. It is in the text instanced in

the matter of worshipping images. God is so jealous of his honor, that he will not suffer an image of himself to be made, lest the image dishonor the substance; nor any image of a creature to be worshipped, though with a less honor, lest that less swell up into a greater. And he that is thus jealous of his honor, and therefore so instances it, is also very curious of it in all other particulars: and though to punish the sins of fathers on the children be more solemnly threatened in this sin only, yet we find it inflicted indifferently in any other great sin, as appears in the former precedents.

This one thing I desire to be strictly observed; that it is with much error and great indiligence usually taught in this question, that the wrath of God descends from fathers to children, only in case the children imitate and write after their fathers' copy; supposing these words—'of them that hate me'.—to relate to the children. But this is expressly against the words of the text and the examples of the thing. God afflicts good children of evil parents for their fathers' sins; and the words are plain and determinate, God visits the sins of the fathers *in tertiam et quartam generationem eorum qui oderunt me*, 'to the third and fourth generation of them, of those fathers that hate me;' that is, on the great-grandchildren of such parents. So that if the great-grandfathers be haters of God and lovers of iniquity, it may entail a curse on so many generations, though the children be haters of their father's hatred, and lovers of God. And this hath been observed even by wise men among the heathens, whose stories tell, that Antigonus was punished for the tyranny of his father Demetrius, Phyleus for his father Augeas, pious and wise Nestor for his father Neleus: and it was so in the case of Jonathan, who lost the kingdom and his life on the stock of his father's sins; and the innocent child of David was slain by the anger of God, not against the child, who never had deserved it, but the father's adultery. I need not here repeat what I said in vindication of the divine justice; but I observed this, to represent the danger of a sinning father or mother, when it shall so infect the family with curses, that it shall ruin a wise and innocent son; and that virtue and innocence, which shall by God be accepted as sufficient through divine mercy to bring the son to heaven, yet, it may be, shall

not be accepted to quit him from feeling the curse of his father's crime in a load of temporal infelicities: and who but a villain would ruin and undo a wise, a virtuous, and his own son? But so it is in all the world. A traitor is condemned to suffer death himself, and his posterity are made beggars and dishonorable: his escutcheon is reversed, his arms of honor are extinguished, the nobleness of his ancestors is forgotten: but his own sin is not, while men, by the characters of infamy, are taught to call that family accursed which had so base a father. Tiresias was esteemed unfortunate, because he could not see his friends and children: the poor man was blind with age. But Athamas and Agave were more miserable, who did see their children, but took them for lions and stags: the parents were miserably frantic. But of all, they deplored the misery of Hercules, who, when he saw his children, took them for enemies, and endeavored to destroy them. And this is the case of all vicious parents. That 'a man's enemies were they of his own house,' was accounted a great calamity: but it is worse when we love them tenderly and fondly, and yet do them all the despite we wish to enemies. But so it is, that in many cases we do more mischief to our children, than if we should strangle them when they are newly taken from their mother's knees, or tear them in pieces as Medea did her brother Absyrtus. For to leave them to inherit a curse, to leave them to an entailed calamity, a misery, a disease, the wrath of God for an inheritance, that it may descend on them, and remark their family like their coat of arms; is to be the parent of evil, the ruin of our family, the causes of mischief to them who ought to be dearer to us than our own eyes. And let us remember this when we are tempted to provoke the jealous God; let us consider, that his anger hath a progeny, and a descending line, and it may break out in the days of our nephews. A Greek woman was accused of adultery, because she brought forth a blackamoor; and could not acquit herself, till she had proved that she had descended in the fourth degree from an Ethiopian: her great-grandfather was a Moor. And, if naturalists say true, that nephews are very often liker to their grandfathers than to their fathers; we see that the resemblance of our souls, and the character of the person, is conveyed by

secret and undiscernible conveyances. Natural production conveys original sin; and therefore, by the channels of the body, it is not strange that men convey an hereditary sin. And lustful sons are usually born to satyrs; and monsters of intemperance to drunkards: and there are also hereditary diseases; which if in the fathers they were effects of their sin, as it is in many cases, it is notorious that the father's sin is punished, and the punishment conveyed by natural instruments. So that it cannot be a wonder, but it ought to be a huge affrightment from a state of sin; if a man can be capable of so much charity as to love himself in his own person, or in the images of his nature, and heirs of his fortunes, and the supports of his family, in the children that God hath given him. Consider therefore that you do not only act your own tragedies when you sin, but you represent and effect the fortune of your children; you slay them with your own barbarous and inhuman hands. Only be pleased to compare the variety of estates, of your own and your children. If they on earth be miserable many times for their father's sins, how great a state of misery is that in hell which they suffer for their own! And how vile a person is that father or mother, who for a little money, or to please a lust, will be a parricide, and imbrue his hands in the blood of his own children!

SERMON II.

PART II.

IV. I AM to consider what remedies there are for sons to cut off this entail of curses; and whether, and by what means, it is possible for sons to prevent the being punished for their fathers' sins. And since this thing is so perplexed and intricate, hath so easy an objection, and so hard an answer, looks so like a cruelty, and so unlike a justice (though it be infinitely just, and

very severe, and a huge enemy to sin); it cannot be thought but that there are not only ways left to reconcile God's proceeding to the strict rules of justice, but also the condition of man to the possibilities of God's usual mercies. One said of old, *Ex tarditate si Dii sontes prætereant, et insontes plectant, justitiam suam non sic recte resarciant*, "If God be so slow to punish the guilty, that the punishment be deferred till the death of the guilty person; and that God shall be forced to punish the innocent, or to let the sin quite escape unpunished; it will be something hard to join that justice with mercy, or to join that action with justice." Indeed, it will seem strange, but the reason of its justice I have already discoursed: if now we can find how to reconcile this to God's mercy too, or can learn how it may be turned into a mercy, we need to take no other care, but that, for our own particular, we take heed we never tempt God's anger on our families, and that by competent and apt instruments we endeavor to cancel the decree, if it be gone out against our families; for then we make use of that severity which God intended; and ourselves shall be refreshed in the shades, and by the cooling brooks of the divine mercy, even then when we see the wrath of God breaking out on the families round about us.

First; the first means to cut off the entail of wrath and cursings from a family, is, for the sons to disavow those signal actions of impiety, in which their fathers were deeply guilty, and by which they stained great parts of their life, or have done something of very great unworthiness and disreputation. *Si quis paterni vitii nascitur hæres, nascitur et pœnæ;* "the heir of his father's wickedness is the heir of his father's curse." And a son comes to inherit a wickedness from his father, three ways.

1. By approving, or any ways consenting to his father's sin: as by speaking of it without regret or shame; by pleasing himself in the story; or by having an evil mind, apt to counsel or do the like, if the same circumstances should occur. For a son may contract a sin, not only by derivation and the contagion of example, but by approbation; not only by a corporal, but by a virtual contact; not only by transcribing an evil copy, but by commending it: and a man may have *animum*

leprosum in cute munda, "a leprous and a polluted mind," even for nothing, even for an empty and ineffective lust. An evil mind may contract the curse of an evil action. And though the son of a covetous father prove a prodigal; yet, if he loves his father's vice for ministering to his vanity, he is disposed not only to a judgment for his own prodigality, but also to the curse of his father's avarice.

2. The son may inherit the father's wickedness by imitation and direct practice; and then the curse is like to come to purpose; a curse by accumulation, a treasure of wrath: and then the children, as they arrive to the height of wickedness by a speedy passage, as being thrust forward by an active example, by countenance, by education, by a seldom restraint, by a remiss discipline; so they ascertain a curse to the family, by being a perverse generation, a family set up in opposition against God, by continuing and increasing the provocation.

3. Sons inherit their fathers' crimes by receiving and enjoying the purchases of their rapine, injustice, and oppression, by rising on the ruin of their fathers' souls, by sitting warm in the furs which their fathers stole, and walking in the grounds which are watered with the tears of oppressed orphans and widows. Now, in all these cases, the rule holds. If the son inherits the sin, he cannot call it unjust if he inherits also his father's punishment. But, to rescind the fatal chain, and break in sunder the line of God's anger, a son is tied in all these cases to disavow his father's crime. But because the cases are several, he must also in several manners do it.

1. Every man is bound not to glory in, or speak honor of, the powerful and unjust actions of his ancestors: but as all the sons of Adam are bound to be ashamed of that original stain, which they derived from the loins of their abused father, they must be humbled in it, they must deplore it as an evil mother, and a troublesome daughter; so must children account it amongst the crosses of their family, and the stains of their honor, that they passed through so impure channels, that in the sense of morality as well as nature, they can 'say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to rottenness, Thou art my mother.' I do not say that sons are bound to publish or declaim against their fathers' crimes, and to speak of their shame

in piazzas and before tribunals; that indeed were a sure way to bring their fathers' sins on their own heads, by their own faults. No: like Shem and Japhet, they must go backward, and cast a veil on their nakedness and shame, lest they bring the curse of their fathers' angry dishonor on their own impious and unrelenting heads. Noah's drunkenness fell on Ham's head, because he did not hide the openness of his father's follies: he made his father ridiculous; but did not endeavor either to amend the sin, or to wrap the dishonor in a pious covering. He that goes to disavow his father's sin by publishing his shame, hides an ill face with a more ugly vizor, and endeavors by torches and fantastic lights to quench the burning of that house which his father set on fire: these fires are to be smothered, and so extinguished. I deny not, but it may become the piety of a child to tell a sad story, to mourn, and represent a real grief for so great a misery, as is a wicked father or mother: but this is to be done with a tenderness as nice as we would dress an eye withal: it must be only with designs of charity, of counsel, of ease, and with much prudence, and a sad spirit. These things being secured, that which in this case remains, is, that in all intercourses between God and ourselves we disavow the crime.

Children are bound to pray to God to sanctify, to cure, to forgive their parents: and even, concerning the sins of our forefathers, the church hath taught us in her litanies, to pray that God would be pleased to forgive them, so that neither we, nor they, may sink under the wrath of God for them: "Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither take thou vengeance of our sins:" *Ours*, in common and conjunction. And David confessed to God, and humbled himself for the sins of his ancestors and decessors: 'Our fathers have done amiss, and dealt wickedly, neither kept they thy great goodness in remembrance, but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea.' So did good King Josiah; 'Great is the wrath of the Lord, which is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book.'* But this is to be done between God

* 2 Kings xxii. 13.

and ourselves; or, if in public, then to be done by general accusation; that God only may read our particular sorrows in the single shame of our families, registered in our hearts, and represented to him with humiliation, shame, and a hearty prayer.

2. Those curses, which descend from the fathers to the children by imitation of the crimes of their progenitors, are to be cut off by special and personal repentance and prayer, as being a state directly opposite to that which procured the curse: and if the sons be pious, or return to an early and severe course of holy living, they are to be remedied as other innocent and pious persons are, who are sufferers under the burdens of their relatives, whom I shall consider by and by. Only observe this; that no public or imaginative disavowings, no ceremonial and pompous rescission of our fathers' crimes, can be sufficient to interrupt the succession of the curse, if the children do secretly practise or approve what they in pretence or ceremony disavow. And this is clearly proved; and it will help to explicate that difficult saying of our blessed Saviour, 'Wo unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they killed them, and ye build their sepulchres:'* that is, the Pharisees were huge hypocrites, and adorned the monuments of the martyr-prophets, and in words disclaimed their fathers' sin, but in deeds and design they approved it; 1. because they secretly wished all such persons dead; *colebant mortuos, quos nollent superstites:* in charity to themselves some men wish their enemies in heaven, and would be at charges for a monument for them, that their malice, and their power, and their bones, might rest in the same grave; and yet that wish and that expense is no testimony of their charity, but of their anger: 2. these men were willing that the monuments of those prophets should remain, and be a visible affrightment to all such bold persons and severe reprehenders as they were; and, therefore, they builded their sepulchres to be as beacons and publications of danger to all honest preachers. And this was the account St. Chrysostom gave of

* Luke xi. 47, 48.

the place: 3. to which also the circumstances of the place concur: for they only said, 'If they had lived in their fathers' days, they would not have done as they did;'* but it is certain they approved it, because they pursued the same courses: and, therefore, our blessed Saviour calls them γενεὰν ἀποκτείνουσαν, not only the children of them that did kill the prophets, but 'a killing generation:' the sin also descends on you, for ye have the same killing mind; and although you honor them that are dead, and cannot shame you; yet you design the same usages against them that are alive, even against the Lord of the prophets, against Christ himself, whom ye will kill. And as Dion said of Caracalla, Πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἀχθόμενος, τιμᾷν τινὰς αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντας ἐπλάττετο, "The man was troublesome to all good men when they were alive, but did them honor when they were dead;"† and when Herod had killed Aristobulus, yet he made him a most magnificent funeral: so, because the Pharisees were of the same humor, therefore our blessed Saviour bids them 'to fill up the measure of their fathers' iniquity;'‡ for they still continued the malice, only they painted it over with a pretence of piety, and of disavowing their fathers' sin; which if they had done really, their being children of persecutors, much less 'the adorning of the prophets' sepulchres,' could not have been just cause of a woe from Christ; this being an act of piety, and the other of nature, inevitable and not chosen by them, and therefore not chargeable on them. He therefore that will to real purposes disavow his father's crimes, must do it heartily, and humbly, and charitably, and throw off all affections to the like actions. For he that finds fault with his father for killing Isaiah or Jeremy, and himself shall kill Aristobulus and John the Baptist; he that is angry because the old prophets were murdered, and shall imprison and beggar and destroy the new ones; he that disavows the persecution in the primitive times, and honors the memory of the dead martyrs, and yet every day makes new ones; he that blames the oppression of the country by any of his predecessors, and yet shall continue to oppress his tenants, and all that are within his gripe; that man cannot

* Matt. xxiii. 30. † Reimar. t. ii. p. 1302.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 32.

hope to be eased from the curse of his father's sins: he goes on to imitate them, and, therefore, to fill up their measure, and to reap a full treasure of wrath.

3. But concerning the third, there is yet more difficulty. Those persons that inherit their fathers' sins by possessing the price of their fathers' souls, that is, by enjoying the goods gotten by their fathers' rapine, may certainly quit the inheritance of the curse, if they quit the purchase of the sin, that is, if they pay their fathers' debts; his debts of contract, and his debts of justice; his debts of intercourse, and his debts of oppression. I do not say that every man is bound to restore all the land which his ancestors have unjustly snatched: for when by law the possession is established, though the grandfather entered like a thief, yet the grandchild is *bonæ fidei* possessor, and may enjoy it justly. And the reasons of this are great and necessary; for the avoiding eternal suits, and perpetual diseases of the rest and conscience: because there is no estate in the world that could be enjoyed by any man honestly, if posterity were bound to make restitution of all the wrongs done by their progenitors. But although the children of the far-removed lines are not obliged to restitution, yet others are; and some for the same, some for other reasons.

1. Sons are tied to restore what their fathers did usurp, or to make agreement and an acceptable recompense for it, if the case be visible, evident, and notorious, and the oppressed party demands it: because in this case the law hath not settled the possession in the new tenant; or if a judge hath, it is by injury; and there is yet no collateral accidental title transferred by long possession, as it is in other cases: and therefore if the son continues to oppress the same person whom his father first injured, he may well expect to be the heir of his father's curse, as well as of his cursed purchase.

2. Whether by law and justice, or not, the person be obliged, nay, although by all the solemnities of law the unjust purchase be established, and that in conscience the grandchildren be not obliged to restitution in their own particulars, but may continue to enjoy it without a new sin; yet if we see a curse descending on the family for the old oppression done in the days of our grandfathers, or if we probably suspect that to be the

cause; then, if we make restitution, we also most certainly remove the curse, because we take away the matter on which the curse is grounded. I do not say we sin if we do not restore; but that, if we do not, we may still be punished. The reason of this is clear and visible: for as without our faults, in many cases, we may enjoy those lands which our forefathers got unjustly, so without our faults we may be punished for them: for as they have transmitted the benefit to us, it is but reasonable we should suffer the appendant calamity. If we receive good, we must also venture the evil that comes along with it. *Res transit cum suo onere:* "All lands and possessions pass with their proper burdens." And if any of my ancestors was a tenant, and a servant, and held his lands as a villain to his lord; his posterity also must do so, though accidentally they become noble. The case is the same. If my ancestors entered unjustly, there is a curse and a plague that is due to that oppression and injustice; and that is 'the burden of the land,' and it descends all along with it. And although I, by the consent of laws, am a just possessor, yet I am obliged to the burden that comes with the land. I am indeed another kind of person than my grandfather: he was a usurper, but I am a just possessor: but because in respect of the land this was but an accidental change, therefore I still am liable to the burden, and the curse that descends with it. But the way to take off the curse is to quit the title; and yet a man may choose. It may be to lose the land would be the bigger curse; but, if it be not, the way is certain how you may be rid of it. There was a custom among the Greeks, that the children of them that died of consumptions or dropsies, all the while their fathers' bodies were burning on their funeral piles, did sit with their feet in cold water, hoping that such a lustration and ceremony would take off the lineal and descending contagion from the children. I know not what cure they found by their superstition: but we may be sure, that if we wash (not our feet, but) our hands of all the unjust purchases which our fathers have transmitted to us, their hydropic thirst of wealth shall not transmit to us a consumption of estate, or any other curse. But this remedy is only in the matter of injury or oppression, not in the case of other sins; because other sins were transient; and, as the guilt

did not pass on the children, so neither did the exterior and permanent effect: and, therefore, in other sins (in case they do derive a curse) it cannot be removed, as in the matter of unjust possession it may be; whose effect (we may so order it) shall no more stick to us than the guilt of our fathers' personal actions.

The sum is this: as kingdoms use to expiate the faults of others by acts of justice; and as churches use to 'remove the accursed thing' from sticking to the communities of the faithful, and the sins of Christians from being required of the whole congregation, by excommunicating and censuring the delinquent persons; so the heirs and sons of families are to remove from their house the curse descending from their fathers' loins —1. by acts of disavowing the sins of their ancestors; 2. by praying for pardon; 3. by being humbled for them; 4. by renouncing the example; and, 5. quitting the affection to the crimes; 6. by not imitating the actions in kind, or in semblance and similitude; and, lastly, 7. by refusing to rejoice in the ungodly purchases, in which their fathers did amiss, and dealt wickedly.

Secondly; but, after all this, many cases do occur in which we find that innocent sons are punished. The remedies I have already discoursed of, are for such children, who have, in some manner or other, contracted and derived the sin on themselves: but if we inquire how those sons, who have no intercourse or affinity with their fathers' sins, or whose fathers' sins were so transient that no benefit or effect did pass on their posterity,—how they may prevent or take off the curse that lies on the family for their fathers' faults; this will have some distant considerations.

1. The pious children of evil parents are to stand firm on the confidence of the divine grace and mercy, and on that persuasion to begin to work on a new stock: for it is as certain that one may derive a blessing on his posterity, as that his parents could transmit a curse: and if any man by piety shall procure God's favor to his relatives and children, it is certain that he hath done more than to escape the punishment of his father's follies. 'If sin doth abound,' and evils by sin are derived from his parents; 'much more shall grace superabound,'

and mercy by grace. If he was in danger from the crimes of others, much rather shall he be secured by his own piety; for if God punishes the sins of the fathers to four generations, yet he rewards the piety of fathers to ten, to hundreds, and to thousands. Many of the ancestors of Abraham were persons not noted for religion, but suffered in the public impiety and almost universal idolatry of their ages: and yet all the evils that could thence descend on the family were wiped off; and God began to reckon with Abraham on a new stock of blessings and piety; and he was, under God, the original of so great a blessing, that his family, for fifteen hundred years together, had from him a title to many favors; and whatever evils did chance to them in the descending ages, were but single evils in respect of that treasure of mercies, which the father's piety had obtained to the whole nation. And it is remarkable to observe how blessings did stick to them for their father's sakes, even whether they would or no. For, first, his grandchild Esau proved a naughty man, and he lost the great blessing which was intailed on the family; but he got, not a curse, but a less blessing: and yet, because he lost the greater blessing, God excluded him from being reckoned in the elder line: for God, foreseeing the event, so ordered it, that he should first lose his birthright, and then lose the blessing; for it was to be certain, the family must be reckoned for prosperous in the proper line; and yet God blessed Esau into a great nation, and made him the father of many princes. Now the line of blessing being reckoned in Jacob, God blessed his family strangely, and by miracle, for almost five generations. He brought them from Egypt by mighty signs and wonders: and when for sin they all died in their way to Canaan, two only excepted, God so ordered it that they were all reckoned as single deaths; the nation still descended, like a river, whose waters were drunk up for the beverage of an army, but still it keeps its name and current, and the waters are supplied by showers, and springs, and providence. After this, iniquity still increased, and then God struck deeper, and spread curses on whole families; he translated the priesthood from line to line, he removed the kingdom from one family to another: and still they sinned worse; and then we read that God smote almost a whole tribe; the tribe of

Benjamin was almost extinguished about the matter of the Levite's concubine: but still God remembered his promise, which he made with their forefathers, and that breach was made up. After this we find a great rupture made, and ten tribes fell into idolatry, and ten tribes were carried captives into Assyria, and never came again: but still God remembered his covenant with Abraham, and left two tribes. But they were restless in their provocation of the God of Abraham; and they also were carried captive: but still God was the God of their fathers, and brought them back, and placed them safe, and they grew again into a kingdom, and should have remained for ever, but that they killed one that was greater than Abraham, even the Messias; and then they were rooted out, and the old covenant cast off, and God delighted no more to be called 'the God of Abraham,' but the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' As long as God kept that relation, so long for the fathers' sakes, they had a title and an inheritance to a blessing; for so saith St. Paul, 'As touching the election, they are beloved, for the fathers' sakes.'*

I insist the longer on this instance, that I may remonstrate how great, and how sure, and how preserving mercies a pious father of a family may derive on his succeeding generations: and if we do but tread in the footsteps of our father Abraham, we shall inherit as certain blessings. But then, I pray, add these considerations.

2. If a great impiety and a clamorous wickedness hath stained the honor of a family, and discomposed its title to the divine mercies and protection, it is not an ordinary piety that can restore this family. An ordinary even course of life, full of sweetness and innocence, will secure every single person in his own eternal interest: but that piety which must be a spring of blessings, and communicative to others, that must plead against the sins of their ancestors, and begin a new bank of mercies for the relatives; that must be a great and excellent, a very religious state of life. A small pension will maintain a single person: but he that hath a numerous family, and many to provide for, needs a greater providence of God, and a bigger provision.

* Rom. xi. 28.

for their maintenance: and a small revenue will not keep up the dignity of a great house; especially if it be charged with a great debt. And this is the very state of the present question. That piety that must be instrumental to take off the curse imminent on a family, to bless a numerous posterity, to secure a fair condition to many ages, and to pay the debts of their fathers' sins, must be so large, as that, all necessary expenses and duties for his own soul being first discharged, it may be remarkable in great expressions, it may be exemplar to all the family, it may be of universal efficacy, large in the extension of parts, deep in the intention of degrees: and then, as the root of a tree receives nourishment, not only sufficient to preserve its own life, but to transmit a plastic juice to the trunk of the tree, and from thence to the utmost branch and smallest germ that knots in the most distant part; so shall the great and exemplar piety of the father of a family not only preserve to the interest of his own soul the life of grace and hopes of glory, but shall be a quickening spirit, active and communicative of a blessing, not only to the trunk of the tree, to the body and rightly-descending line, but even to the collateral branches, to the most distant relatives; and all that shall claim a kindred shall have a title to a blessing. And this was the way that was prescribed to the family of Eli, on whom a sad curse was entailed, that there should not be an old man of the family for ever, and that they should be beggars, and lose the office of priesthood: by the counsel of R. Johanan, the son of Zaccheus, all the family betook themselves to a great, a strict, and a severe religion; and God was intreated to revoke his decree, to be reconciled to the family, to restore them to the common condition of men, from whence they stood separate by the displeasure of God against the crime of Eli, and his sons Hophni and Phineas. This course is sure either to take off the judgment, or to change it into a blessing; to take away the rod, or the smart and evil of it; to convert the punishment into a mere natural or human chance, and that chance to the opportunity of a virtue, and that virtue to the occasion of a crown.

3. It is of great use for the securing of families, that every master of a family order his life so, that his piety and virtue be

as communicative as is possible; that is, that he secure the religion of his whole family by a severe supravision and animadversion, and by cutting off all those unprofitable and hurtful branches which load the tree, and hinder the growth and stock, and disimprove the fruit, and revert evil juice to the very root itself. Calvisius Sabinus laid out vast sums of money on his servants to stock his house with learned men; and brought one that could recite all Homer by heart; a second that was ready at Hesiod; a third at Pindar; and for every of the lyrics one; having this fancy, that all that learning was his own; and whatsoever his servants knew, made him so much the more skilful. It was noted in the man for a rich and prodigal folly: but if he had changed his instance, and brought none but virtuous servants into his house, he might better have reckoned his wealth on their stock, and the piety of his family might have helped to bless him, and to have increased the treasure of their master's virtue. Every man that would either cut off the title of an old curse, or secure a blessing on a new stock, must make virtue as large in the fountain as he can, that it may the sooner water all his relatives with fruitfulness and blessings. And this was one of the things that God noted in Abraham, and blessed his family for it, and his posterity: 'I know that Abraham will teach his sons to fear me.' When a man teaches his family to know and fear God, then he scatters a blessing round about his habitation. And this helps to illustrate the reason of the thing, as well as to prove its certainty. We hear it spoken in our books of religion, that the faith of the parents is imputed to their children to good purposes, and that a good husband sanctifies an ill wife, and 'a believing wife an unbelieving husband;' and either of them makes the children to be sanctified, 'else they were unclean and unholy:' that is, the very designing children to the service of God is a sanctification of them; and therefore St. Jerome calls Christian children *candidatos fidei Christianæ*. And if this very designation of them makes them holy, that is, acceptable to God, entitled to the promises, partakers of the covenant, within the condition of sons; much more shall it be effectual to greater blessings, when the parents take care that the children shall be actually pious, full of

sobriety, full of religion; then it becomes a holy house, a chosen generation, and an elect family; and then there can no evil happen to them, but such which will bring them nearer to God: that is, no cross, but the cross of Christ; no misfortune, but that which shall lead them to felicity; and if any semblance of a curse happens in the generations, it is but like the anathema of a sacrifice; not an accursed, but a devoted thing: for so the sacrifice, on whose neck the priest's knife doth fall, is so far from being accursed, that it helps to get a blessing to all that join in the oblation. So every misfortune, that shall discompose the ease of a pious and religious family, shall but make them fit to be presented unto God; and the rod of God shall be like the branches of fig-trees, bitter and sharp in themselves, but productive of most delicious fruit. No evil can curse the family whose stock is pious, and whose 'branches are holiness to the Lord.' If any leaf or any bough shall fall untimely, God shall gather them up, and place them in his temple, or at the foot of his throne; and that family must needs be blessed, whom infelicity itself cannot make accursed.

4. If a curse be feared to descend on a family for the fault of their ancestors, pious sons have yet another way to secure themselves, and to withdraw the curse from the family, or themselves from the curse; and that is, by doing some very great and illustrious act of piety, an action *in gradu heroico*, as Aristotle calls it, "an heroical action." If there should happen to be one martyr in a family, it would reconcile the whole kindred to God, and make him, who is more inclined to mercy than to severity, rather to be pleased with the relatives of the martyr, than to continue to be angry with the nephews of a deceased sinner. I cannot insist long on this: but you may see it proved by one great instance in the case of Phineas, who killed an unclean prince, and turned the wrath of God from his people. He was zealous for God and for his countrymen, and did a heroical action of zeal: 'Wherefore,' saith God, 'behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him; even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.' Thus the

sons of Rechab obtained the blessing of an enduring and blessed family, because they were most strict and religious observers of their father's precepts, and kept them after his death, and abstained from wine for ever; and no temptation could invite them to taste it; for they had as great reverence to their father's ashes, as, being children, they had to his rod and to his eyes. Thus a man may turn the wrath of God from his family, and secure a blessing for posterity, by doing some great noble acts of charity; or a remarkable chastity like that of Joseph; or an expensive, an affectionate religion and love to Christ and his servants, as Mary Magdalen did. Such things as these, which are extraordinary egressions and transvolations beyond the ordinary course of an even piety, God loves to reward with an extraordinary favor; and gives them testimony by an extra-regular blessing.

One thing more I have to add by way of advice; and that is, that all parents and fathers of families, from whose loins a blessing or a curse usually does descend, be very careful, not only generally in all the actions of our lives (for that I have already pressed), but particularly in the matter of repentance; that they be curious that they finish it, and do it thoroughly; for there are certain ὑστερήματα μετανοίας, "leavings of repentance," which make that God's anger is taken from us so imperfectly: and although God, for his sake who died for us, will pardon a returning sinner, and bring him to heaven through tribulation and a fiery trial; yet, when a man is weary of his sorrow, and his fastings are a load to him, and his sins are not so perfectly renounced or hated as they ought; the parts of repentance, which are left unfinished, do sometimes fall on the heads or on the fortunes of the children. I do not say this is regular and certain; but sometimes God deals thus: for this thing hath been so, and therefore it may be so again. We see it was done in the case of Ahab; he 'humbled himself, and went softly, and lay in sackcloth,' and called for pardon, and God took from him a judgment which was falling heavily on him: but we all know his repentance was imperfect and lame: the same evil fell on his sons; for so said God: 'I will bring the evil on his house in his son's days.' Leave no arrears

for thy posterity to pay; but repent with an integral, a holy and excellent repentance, that God being reconciled to thee thoroughly, for thy sake also he may bless thy seed after thee.

And, after all this, add a continual, a fervent, a hearty, a never-ceasing prayer for thy children, ever remembering, when they beg a blessing, that God hath put much of their fortune into your hands; and a transient formal "God bless thee," will not outweigh the load of a great vice, and the curse which scatters from thee by virtual contact, and by the channels of relation, if thou beest a vicious person: nothing can issue from thy fountain but bitter waters. And, as it were a great impudence for a condemned traitor to beg of his injured prince a province for his son for his sake; so it is an ineffective blessing we give our children, when we beg for them what we have no title to for ourselves; nay, when we convey to them nothing but a curse. The prayer of a sinner, the unhallowed wish of a vicious parent, is but a poor donative to give to a child who sucked poison from his nurse, and derives cursing from his parents. They are punished with a doubled torture in the shame and pain of the damned, who, dying enemies to God, have left an inventory of sins and wrath to be divided amongst their children. But they that can truly give a blessing to their children, are such as live a blessed life, and pray holy prayers, and perform an integral repentance, and do separate from the sins of their progenitors, and do illustrious actions, and begin the blessing of their family on a new stock. For as from the eyes of some persons there shoots forth an evil influence, and some have an evil eye, and are infectious, some look healthfully as a friendly planet, and innocent as flowers; and as some fancies convey private effects to confederate and allied bodies; and between the very vital spirits of friends and relatives there is a cognation, and they refresh each other like social plants; and a good man is a friend to every good man:* and they say that a usurer knows a usurer, and one rich man another, there being by the very manners of men contracted a similitude of nature, and a communication of effects: so in parents and their children

* Διαμένει οὖν τούτων φιλία, ἕως ἂν ἀγαθοὶ ὦσιν· ἡ δ' ἀρετὴ μόνιμον. Arist.

there is so great a society of nature and of manners, of blessing and cursing, that an evil parent cannot perish in a single death; and holy parents never eat their meal of blessing alone, but they make the room shine like the fire of a holy sacrifice; and a father's or a mother's piety makes all the house festival and full of joy from generation to generation. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON III.

JEREMIAH, CHAP. XIII.—VERSE 16.

PART I.

GOD is the eternal fountain of honor and the spring of glory; and yet he is pleased to say that our sins dishonor him, and our obedience glorifies him; though he can be really glorified by nothing but by himself and by his own instruments which he makes as mirrors to reflect his glory: thus he glorified himself in making the frame of the universe; and even when he destroyed the old world, he glorified himself in the image of his justice: but, above all, God rejoiced in his holy Son, who hath transmitted to us a great manner of the divine glorification, being to us the author and example of giving glory to God, &c.

He that hath dishonored God by his sins, hath no better way to glorify him, than by returning to his duty, and advancing the divine attributes. Concerning the philosophy of the expression *to glorify God*, much need not be said: certain it is, that, in the style of Scripture, repentance is the glorification of him; and the prophet, by calling on the people to *give God glory*, calls on them *to repent*. And this it was which Joshua said to Achan. (Josh. vii. 19.) The words of the text therefore may be read thus: *Repent of all your sins, before God cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains.* Hence we have the duty of repentance, and the time of it.

This exhortation of the prophet was always full of caution and prudence, but now is highly necessary: this shown. Certainly, nothing hath made more ample harvests for the devil,

than the deferring of repentance on vain confidences, and the lessening it in extension and degree, whilst we imagine that a few tears will blot out the baseness of fifty years of impiety. For the curing of this evil, the nature of repentance is exhibited, and the inefficacy of a repentance which is deferred to a death-bed,

1. First, then, repentance implies a deep sorrow, as the beginning and introduction of this duty; not a superficial sigh or tear, but a hearty pungent sorrow: yet it must be observed that sorrow for sins is not repentance; not that duty which gives glory to God, so as to obtain of him that he will glorify us. Repentance is a great volume of duty, and godly sorrow is but the frontispiece or title-page. *Godly sorrow worketh repentance:* sorrow is the parent, and repentance is the offspring. Our sorrow for sin is not to be estimated by our tears and sensible expressions, but by our active hatred and dereliction of sin.

2. It is a sad error among many who do some things towards repentance, that they mistake the first addresses and instruments of this part of repentance for the duty itself. Confession of sins is in order to the dereliction of them: but then confession must not be like the unlading of a ship, to take in new stowage. No confession can be of any use, but as it is an instrument of shame, humiliation, and dereliction of sin: this topic enlarged on.

3. Let us then suppose our penitent advanced thus far, as that he decrees against all sin, and in hearty purposes resolves to decline it, as having been his betrayer and destroyer: yet we must be curious (for now only the repentance properly begins) that it be not like the springings of the thorny or the high-way ground, soon up and soon down: various states of resolution commented on. That only is the beginning of a holy repentance, which goes forth into acts, whose acts enlarge into habits, and whose habits produce the fruits of a holy life.

From hence we are to take our estimate, whence our resolutions of piety must commence. He that resolves not to live well till the time comes that he must die, is as ridiculous in his great design, as he is impertinent in his intermedial purposes, and vain in his hope. How can a dying man, to any real effect, resolve to be chaste? for virtue is an act of election, and chastity is the contending against a proud imperious lust: what then does he resolve against, who can be no more tempted by his lust, than he can return to his youthful vigor? And since none of the purposes of a dying man can be reduced to act, by what law, reason, or covenant can we distinguish them from those of a lively and healthful person? this topic enlarged on. The hope of those persons shown to be vain, who go on in their evil ways till their last sickness; or whose purposes are for ever blasted with the next violent temptation, &c.

4. Lastly, suppose all be done; and that, by a long course of strict severity, mortification, and circumspection, we have overcome all our vicious, baser habits, and that we are clean and swept; yet this is but one half of repentance. To renew us, and to restore us to God's favor, *having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, we must give all diligence, and add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowlege, to knowlege temperance, to temperance patience;* (and so on) *to godliness, brotherly kindness and charity.* This is the sum total of repentance: we must not only have overcome sin, but we must, after great diligence, have acquired the habits of all those Christian graces which relate to ourselves, our neighbor, and to God: this topic pursued. Conclusion, on the difficulty of beginning a repentance which has been long delayed, &c.

PART II.

This great subject pursued; in which it is shown, 1. what parts and ingredients of repentance are assigned, when it is described in Scripture: 2. what are the absolute necessities of a holy life, and what is meant by the Scripture phrase, *to live holily:* 3. what directions or intimations we have concerning the last time of beginning to repent, or what is the longest period to which any man may venture with safety.

I. Repentance is not only an abolition and extinction of the body of sin, a bringing it to the altar, &c., but we must also *mingle gold and rich presents*, the oblation of good works and holy habits with the sacrifice; which has been already shown.

If we would see repentance in its full stature and constitution described, we shall find it to be one half of all that which God requires of Christians. Faith and repentance make up the whole duty of a Christian. Faith is a sacrifice of the understanding to God; repentance sacrifices the whole will to him: the one makes us disciples, the other servants of Jesus Christ: so that as faith contains all knowlege necessary to salvation, repentance comprehends the whole practice and working duty of a returning Christian. Whatsoever is practical, the practice of all obedience, is called in Scripture *repentance from dead works;* which means not mere sorrow from dead works, which is not sense; but supposes two terms, a conversion from dead works to living works; from *the death of sin* to *the life of righteousness.*

The lineaments of this great duty described out of the Old Testament; in which it is shown that there is nothing to countenance a persevering sinner, or a death-bed penitent.

The same also shown out of the New Testament. Practice of the primitive church in not admitting sinners to communion, till after a long time passed in penitence.

Repentance stated to be the institution of a philosophical and

severe life, an extirpation of all impiety, a final passing through all the parts of holy living. Consideration whether this be possible on a death-bed, when a man is frightened into an involuntary, sudden, and unchosen piety. This first subject of consideration ended with a plain exhortation; that since repentance is a duty of such vast dimensions, it should not be crowded into such a narrow room that it may be stifled in its birth, &c. Reflections added: 1. that he who resolves to sin on a resolution to repent, by every act of sin makes himself more incapable of repenting, by growing more and more in love with sin, &c.: 2. to repent, signifies to be sorrowful, to be ashamed, and to wish a thing had never been done: then see the folly of this temptation; I would not sin, but that I hope to repent, that is, I hope to be sorrowful for having done it, to come to shame and self-reproach for it, &c.: 3. for it must be considered, that he who repents wishes he had never committed the sin. Does he then wish so on reason, or without reason? Surely, if he may, when he has satisfied his lust, ask God pardon, and be admitted on as easy terms for the time to come, as if he had not done the sin, he has no reason to be sorrowful, or to wish he had not done it. But he that truly repents, wishes and would give all the world that he had never done it: surely then his present condition, in respect of his past sin, has some very great evil in it; or why else should he be so much troubled? This shown in the hard duty to which he is bound, &c. Concluding reflections on this topic.

II. On the necessity, the absolute necessity, of holy living. God hath made a covenant with us that we must give up ourselves, our bodies and souls, not a *dying*, but a *living* and healthful sacrifice. He hath forgiven all our old sins; and we have bargained to quit them, from the time we first enlisted under the banners of Christ. We have taken the sacramental oath, to *believe, obey, and keep our station*, against all adversaries, &c.

The pretence that God's commandments are impossible, shown to be false; assistance of God's grace given if we do our utmost, &c. We are to *follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:* this commented on and explained.

This then is the condition of the covenant; and it is certain that sorrow for not having done what is commanded us, and a purpose to do it, will not acquit us before God. For what purpose are all these injunctions in almost every page of Scripture, of *walking in light*, of *being holy as God is holy*, of *putting on the Lord Jesus*, &c. &c. but that it is the purpose of God, and the design of Christ, and of the covenant made with us, that we should expect heaven on no other terms but those of a holy life, in faith and obedience to Christ?

Now, if a person, who has been vicious and ungodly through life, can, for any thing which he may do on his death-bed, be said to live a holy life, then his hopes are not desperate. It will be a vain question to ask, whether or no God cannot save a dying man that repents; for God's power is no ingredient in this inquiry; but only his will, which is declared against such a supposition: the topic farther considered: miserable state of those men shown, who sow in the flesh, and would reap in the spirit.

III. Last inquiry; into the time, the latest time of beginning our repentance. What is the last period, after which all repentance will be ineffectual? To this captious question many things may be opposed: 1. we have entered into a covenant with God, to serve him from the day of our baptism to our death: this enlarged on: 2. Scripture names no other time but *to-day:* 3. the duty of a Christian is described by Scripture to be such as requires length of time and patient industry: 4. there is a certain time set for repentance, and beyond that all our industry is ineffectual. There is *a day of visitation, our own day*, and there is *a day of visitation, God's day*. This exem-

plified in the destruction of Jerusalem: the topic enlarged on.

Therefore concerning the time of beginning to repent, no man is certain but he that hath done his work. He that repents to-day, repents late enough in not beginning yesterday: but he that puts it off till to-morrow, is vain and miserable.

But, it may be said, what will you have a man to do that hath lived wickedly, and is now cast on his death-bed? Shall he despair, and neglect all movements of piety, &c.? God forbid. Let him do all he can, for it is little enough.

But shall such persons despair of salvation? This only can be said; that they are to consider the conditions which God requires of us, and whether they have done accordingly. If such persons have a promise of heaven, let them show it, and hope it, and enjoy it: if they have no promise, they must thank themselves for bringing themselves into a condition out of the covenant.

But will not trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ save such persons? For that we must be tried by the word of God, in which there is no contract made with a person who lived in name a Christian, but in practice a heathen, &c.

But why may we not be saved, as well as the thief on the cross? Because our case is not at all like his: this fully shown.

Therefore let no Christian, who hath covenanted with God to give him the service of his life, think that God will be answered with the sighs and prayers of a dying man. Let him not deceive himself: for no man can in a moment root out long-contracted habits of vice, nor exercise the duty of self-mortification, &c. on his death-bed.

SERMON III.

THE INVALIDITY OF A LATE OR DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

JEREMIAH, CHAP. XIII.—VERSE 16.

Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light (or, lest while ye look for light), he shall turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

PART I.

God is the eternal fountain of honor and the spring of glory: in him it dwells essentially, from him it derives originally; and when an action is glorious, or a man is honorable, it is because the action is pleasing to God, in the relation of obedience or imitation, and because the man is honored by God, and by God's vicegerent: and therefore, God cannot be dishonored, because all honor comes from himself; he cannot but be glorified, because to be himself is to be infinitely glorious. And yet he is pleased to say, that our sins dishonor him, and our obedience does glorify him. But as the sun, the great eye of the world, prying into the recesses of rocks and the hollowness of valleys, receives species or visible forms from these objects, but he beholds them only by that light which proceeds from himself; so does God, who is the light of that eye; he receives reflexes and returns from us, and these he calls 'glorifications' of himself, but they are such which are made so by his own gracious acceptation. For God

cannot be glorified by any thing but by himself, and by his own instruments, which he makes as mirrors to reflect his own excellency; that by seeing the glory of such emanations, he may rejoice in his own works, because they are images of his infinity. Thus when he made the beauteous frame of heaven and earth, he rejoiced in it, and glorified himself; because it was the glass in which he beheld his wisdom and almighty power. And when God destroyed the old world, in that also he glorified himself; for in those waters he saw the image of his justice,—they were the looking-glass for that attribute; and God is said 'to laugh at' and rejoice in the destruction of a sinner, because he is pleased with the economy of his own laws, and the excellent proportions he hath made of his judgments consequent to our sins. But, above all, God rejoiced in his holy Son; for he was the image of the Divinity, 'the character and express image of his person;' in him he beheld his own essence, his wisdom, his power, his justice, and his person; and he was that excellent instrument designed from eternal ages to represent; as in a double mirror, not only the glories of God to himself, but also to all the world; and he glorified God by the instrument of obedience, in which God beheld his own dominion and the sanctity of his laws clearly represented; and he saw his justice glorified, when it was fully satisfied by the passion of his Son: and so he hath transmitted to us a great manner of the divine glorification, being become to us the author and example of giving glory to God after the manner of men, that is, by well doing and patient suffering, by obeying his laws and submitting to his power, by imitating his holiness and confessing his goodness, by remaining innocent or becoming penitent; for this also is called in the text 'giving glory to the Lord our God.'

For he that hath dishonored God by sins, that is, hath denied, by a moral instrument of duty and subordination, to confess the glories of his power, and the goodness of his laws; and hath dishonored and despised his mercy, which God intended as an instrument of our piety; hath no better way to glorify God, than, by returning to his duty, to advance the honor of the divine attributes, in which he is pleased to communicate himself, and to have intercourse with man. He that repents,

confesses his own error, and the righteousness of God's laws; and by judging himself confesses that he deserves punishment; and therefore, that God is righteous if he punishes him: and, by returning, confesses God to be the fountain of felicity, and the foundation of true, solid, and permanent joys, saying in the sense and passion of the disciples, 'Whither shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life:' and, by humbling himself, exalts God, by making the proportions of distance more immense and vast. And as repentance does contain in it all the parts of holy life, which can be performed by a returning sinner (all the acts and habits of virtue being but parts, or instances, or effects of repentance); so all the actions of a holy life do constitute the mass and body of all those instruments, whereby God is pleased to glorify himself. For if God is glorified in the sun and moon, in the rare fabric of the honeycombs, in the discipline of bees, in the economy of pismires, in the little houses of birds, in the curiosity of an eye, God being pleased to delight in those little images and reflexes of himself from those pretty mirrors, which, like a crevice in the wall, through a narrow perspective, transmit the species of a vast excellency; much rather shall God be pleased to behold himself in the glasses of our obedience, in the emissions of our will and understanding; these being rational and apt instruments to express him, far better than the natural, as being nearer communications of himself.

But I shall no longer discourse of the philosophy of this expression: certain it is, that in the style of Scripture, repentance is the great 'glorification of God;' and the prophet, by calling the people to 'give God glory,' calls on them 'to repent,' and so expresses both the duty and the event of it; the event being 'glory to God on high, peace on earth, and good-will towards men' by the sole instrument of repentance. And this was it which Joshua said to Achan, 'Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him:'* that one act of repentance is one act of glorifying God. And this David acknowleged; 'Against thee only have I sinned: *ut tu justificeris*, that thou mightest be justified or cleared:'† that

* Joshua, vii. 19. † Psal. li. 4.

is, that God may have the honor of being righteous, and we the shame of receding from so excellent a perfection; or, as St. Paul quotes and explicates the place, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.'* But to clear the sense of this expression of the prophet, observe the words of St. John; 'And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over those plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.'†

So that having strength and reason from these so many authorities, I may be free to read the words of my text thus; 'Repent of all your sins, before God cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains.' And then we have here the duty of repentance, and the time of its performance. It must be *μετάνοια εὔκαιρος*, "a seasonable and timely repentance," a repentance which must begin before our darkness begin, a repentance in the day-time; *ut dum dies est, operemini*, "that ye may work while it is to-day;" lest, if we 'stumble on the dark mountains,' that is, fall into the ruins of old age, which makes a broad way narrow, and a plain way to be a craggy mountain; or if we stumble and fall into our last sickness; instead of health God send us to our grave; and instead of light and salvation, which we then confidently look for, he make our state to be outer darkness, that is, misery irremediable, misery eternal.

This exhortation of the prophet was always full of caution and prudence, but now it is highly necessary; since men, who are so clamorously called to repentance, that they cannot avoid the necessity of it, yet, that they may reconcile an evil life with the hopes of heaven, have crowded this duty into so little room, that it is almost strangled and extinct; and they have lopped off so many members, that they have reduced the whole body of it to the dimensions of a little finger, sacrificing their childhood to vanity, their youth to lust and to intemperance, their manhood to ambition and rage, pride and revenge, secular desires and unholy actions; and yet still further, giving their

* Rom. iii. 4. † Rev. xvi. 9.

old age to covetousness and oppression, to the world and the devil: and, after all this, what remains for God and for religion? Oh, for that they will do well enough: on their death-bed they will think a few godly thoughts, they will send for a priest to minister comfort to them, they will pray and ask God forgiveness, and receive the holy sacrament, and leave their goods behind them, disposing them to their friends and relatives, and some dole and issues of the alms-basket to the poor; and if after all this they die quietly, and like a lamb, and be canonised by a bribed flatterer in a funeral sermon, they make no doubt but they are children of the kingdom, and perceive not their folly, till, without hope of remedy, they roar in their expectations of a certain, but a horrid eternity of pains. Certainly nothing hath made more ample harvests for the devil, than the deferring of repentance on vain confidences, and lessening it in the extension of parts as well as intention of degrees, while we imagine that a few tears and scatterings of devotion are enough to expiate the baseness of a fifty or a threescore years' impiety. This I shall endeavor to cure, by showing what it is to repent, and that repentance implies in it the duty of a life, or of many and great, of long and lasting parts of it; and then, by direct arguments, showing that repentance put off to our death-bed, is invalid and ineffectual, sick, languid, and impotent, like our dying bodies and disabled faculties.

1. First, therefore, repentance implies a deep sorrow, as the beginning and introduction of this duty: not a superficial sigh or tear, not a calling ourselves sinners and miserable persons: this is far from that 'godly sorrow that worketh repentance:' and yet I wish there were none in the world, or none amongst us, who cannot remember that ever they have done this little towards the abolition of their multitudes of sins: but yet, if it were not a hearty, pungent sorrow, a sorrow that shall break the heart in pieces, a sorrow that shall so irreconcile us to sin, as to make us rather choose to die than to sin, it is not so much as the beginning of repentance. But in Holy Scripture, when the people are called to repentance, and sorrow (which is ever the prologue to it) marches sadly, and first opens the scene, it is ever expressed to be great, clamorous, and sad: it is called 'a weeping sorely' in the next verse after my text; 'a

weeping with the bitterness of heart;' 'a turning to the Lord with weeping, fasting, and mourning;'* 'a weeping day and night;' the 'sorrow of heart;' the 'breaking of the spirit;' the 'mourning like a dove,' and 'chattering like a swallow.'† And if we observe the threnes and sad accents of the Prophet Jeremy, when he wept for the sins of his nation; the heart-breakings of David, when he mourned for his adultery and murder; and the bitter tears of St. Peter, when he washed off the guilt and baseness of his fall, and the denying his Master; we shall be sufficiently instructed in this *prælu-dium* or "introduction" to repentance; and that it is not every breath of a sigh, or moisture of a tender eye; not every crying "Lord have mercy on me," that is such a sorrow, as begins our restitution to the state of grace and divine favor; but such a sorrow, that really condemns ourselves, and by an active, effectual sentence, declares us worthy of stripes and death, of sorrow and eternal pains, and willingly endures the first to prevent the second; and weeps, and mourns, and fasts, to obtain of God but to admit us to a possibility of restitution. And although all sorrow for sins hath not the same expression, nor the same degree of pungency and sensitive trouble, which differs according to the temper of the body, custom, the sex, and accidental tenderness;‡ yet it is not a godly sorrow, unless it really produce those effects: that is, 1. that it makes us really to hate, and, 2. actually to decline sin; and, 3. produce in us a fear of God's anger, a sense of the guilt of his displeasure; and, 4. then such consequent trouble as can consist with such apprehension of the divine displeasure: which, if it express not in tears and hearty complaints, must be expressed in watchings and strivings against sin; in confessing the goodness and justice of God threatening or punishing us; in patiently bearing the rod of God; in confession of our sins; in accusation of ourselves; in perpetual begging of pardon, and mean and base opinions of ourselves; and in all the natural productions from these, according to our temper and constitution: it must be a sorrow of the reasonable faculty, the greatest in its kind: and if it be

* Ezek. xxvii. 31. † Joel, ii. 13.

‡ See Rule of Holy Living, art. Repentance.

less in kind, or not productive of these effects, it is not a godly sorrow, not the *exordium* of repentance.

But I desire that it be observed, that sorrow for sins is not repentance; not that duty which gives glory to God, so as to obtain of him that he will glorify us. Repentance is a great volume of duty; and godly sorrow is but the frontispiece or title-page; it is the harbinger or first introduction to it: or, if you will consider it in the words of St. Paul, 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance:'* sorrow is the parent, and repentance is the product. And, therefore, it is a high piece of ignorance to suppose, that a crying out and roaring for our sins on our death-bed can reconcile us to God: our crying to God must be so early and so lasting, as to be able to teem and produce such a daughter, which must live long, and grow from an embryo to an infant, from infancy to childhood, from thence to the fulness of the stature of Christ; and then it is a holy and a happy sorrow. But if it be a sorrow only of a death-bed, it is a fruitless shower; or, like the rain of Sodom, not the beginning of repentance, but the kindling of a flame, the commencement of an eternal sorrow. For Ahab had a great sorrow, but it wrought nothing on his spirit; it did not reconcile his affections to his duty, and his duty to God. Judas had so great a sorrow for betraying the innocent blood of his Lord, that it was intolerable to his spirit, and he 'burst in the middle.' And if mere sorrow be repentance, then hell is full of penitents; for 'there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for evermore.'

Let us, therefore, beg of God, as Caleb's daughter did of her father; *Dedisti mihi terram aridam, da etiam et irriguam*, 'Thou hast given me a dry land, give me also a land of waters,' a dwelling-place in tears, rivers of tears: *Ut, quoniam non sumus digni oculos orando ad cœlum levare, at simus digni oculos plorando cæcare*, as St. Austin's expression is; "That because we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to heaven in prayer, yet we may be worthy to weep ourselves blind for sin." The meaning is, that we beg sorrow of God, such a sorrow as may be sufficient to quench the flames of lust, and surmount the hills of our pride, and may extinguish

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

our thirst of covetousness; that is, a sorrow that shall be an effective principle of arming all our faculties against sin, and heartily setting on the work of grace, and the persevering labors of a holy life. I shall only add one word to this: that our sorrow for sin is not to be estimated by our tears and our sensible expressions, but by our active hatred and dereliction of sin; and is many times unperceived in outward demonstration. It is reported of the mother of Peter Lombard, Gratian, and Comestor, that she having had three sons begotten in unhallowed embraces, on her death-bed did omit the recitation of those crimes to her confessor; adding this for apology, that her three sons proved persons so eminent in the church, that their excellence was abundant recompense for her demerit; and therefore, she could not grieve, because God had glorified himself so much by three instruments so excellent; and that although her sin had abounded, yet God's grace did superabound. Her confessor replied, *At dole saltem, quod dolere non possis,* "Grieve that thou canst not grieve." And so must we always fear, that our trouble for sin is not great enough, that our sorrow is too remiss, that our affections are indifferent: but we can only be sure that our sorrow is a godly sorrow, when it worketh repentance; that is, when it makes us hate and leave all our sin, and take up the cross of patience or penance; that is, confess our sin, accuse ourselves, condemn the action by hearty sentence: and then, if it hath no other emanation but fasting and prayer for its pardon, and hearty industry towards its abolition, our sorrow is not reprovable.

2. For sorrow alone will not do it; there must follow a total dereliction of our sin; and this is the first part of repentance. Concerning which I consider, that it is a sad mistake amongst many that do some things towards repentance, that they mistake the first addresses and instruments of this part of repentance for the whole duty itself. Confession of sins is in order to the dereliction of them: but then confession must not be like the unlading of a ship to take in new stowage; or the vomits of intemperance, which ease the stomach that they may continue the merry meeting. But such a confession is too frequent, in which men either comply with custom, or seek to ease a present load or gripe of conscience, or are willing to dress up their souls against a festival, or hope for pardon on so

easy terms: these are but retirings back to leap the farther into mischief; or but approaches to God with the lips. No confession can be of any use, but as it is an instrument of shame to the person, of humiliation to the man, and dereliction of the sin; and receives its recompense but as it adds to these purposes: all other is like 'the bleating of the calves and the lowing of the oxen,' which Saul reserved after the spoil of Agag; they proclaim the sin, but do nothing towards its cure; they serve God's end to make us justly to be condemned out of our own mouths, but nothing at all towards our absolution. Nay, if we proceed farther to the greatest expressions of humiliation (parts of which I reckon fasting, praying for pardon, judging and condemning of ourselves by instances of a present indignation against a crime); yet, unless this proceed so far as to a total deletion of the sin, to the extirpation of every vicious habit, God is not glorified by our repentance, nor we secured in our eternal interest. Our sin must be brought to judgment, and, like Antinous in Homer, laid in the midst, as the sacrifice and the cause of all the mischief.

Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἤδη κεῖται, ὃς αἴτιος ἔπλετο πάντων. Od. x. 48.

This is the murderer, this is the 'Achan,' this is 'he that troubles Israel:' let the sin be confessed and carried with the pomps and solemnities of sorrow to its funeral, and so let the murderer be slain. But if, after all the forms of confession and sorrow, fasting and humiliation, and pretence of doing the will of God, we 'spare Agag and the fattest of the cattle,' our delicious sins, and still leave an unlawful king, and a tyrant sin to reign in our mortal bodies; we may pretend what we will towards repentance, but we are no better penitents than Ahab; no nearer to the obtaining of our hopes than Esau was to his birthright, 'for whose repentance there was no place left, though he sought it carefully with tears.'

3. Well, let us suppose our penitent advanced thus far, as that he decrees against all sin, and in his hearty purposes resolves to decline it, as in a severe sentence he hath condemned it as his betrayer and his murderer; yet we must be curious (for now only the repentance properly begins) that it be not only like the springings of the thorny or the high-way ground,

soon up and soon down: for some men, when a sadness or an unhandsome accident surprises them, then they resolve against their sin; but, like the goats in Aristotle, they give their milk no longer than they are stung; as soon as the thorns are removed, these men return to their first hardness, and resolve then to act their first temptation. Others there are who never resolve against a sin, but either when they have no temptation to it, or when their appetites are newly satisfied with it; like those who immediately after a full dinner resolve to fast at supper, and they keep it till their appetite returns, and then their resolution unties like the cords of vanity, or the gossamer against the violence of the northern wind. Thus a lustful person fills all the capacity of his lust; and when he is wearied, and the sin goes off with unquietness and regret, and the appetite falls down like a horse-leech, when it is ready to burst with putrefaction and an unwholesome plethory, then he resolves to be a good man, and could almost vow to be a hermit; and hates his lust, as Amnon hated his sister Tamar, just when he had newly acted his unworthy rape: but the next spring-tide that comes, every wave of the temptation makes an inroad on the resolution, and gets ground, and prevails against it, more than his resolution prevailed against his sin. How many drunken persons, how many swearers, resolve daily and hourly against their sin, and yet act them not once the less for all their infinite heap of shamefully-retreating purposes! That resolution that begins on just grounds of sorrow and severe judgment, on fear and love, that is made in the midst of a temptation, that is inquisitive into all the means and instruments of the cure, that prays perpetually against a sin, that watches continually against a surprise, and never sinks into it by deliberation; that fights earnestly, and carries on the war prudently, and prevails by a never-ceasing diligence against the temptation; that only is a pious and well-begun repentance. They that have their fits of a quartan, well and ill for ever, and think themselves in perfect health when the ague is retired, till its period returns, are dangerously mistaken. Those intervals of imperfect and fallacious resolution are nothing but states of death: and if a man should depart this world in one of those godly fits, as he thinks them, he is no nearer to obtain his

blessed hope, than a man in the stone-colic is to health when his pain is eased for the present, his disease still remaining, and threatening an unwelcome return. That resolution only is the beginning of a holy repentance, which goes forth into act, and whose acts enlarge into habits, and whose habits are productive of the fruits of a holy life.

From hence we are to take our estimate, whence our resolutions of piety must commence. He that resolves not to live well, till the time comes that he must die, is ridiculous in his great design, as he is impertinent in his intermedial purposes, and vain in his hope. Can a dying man to any real effect resolve to be chaste? For virtue must be an act of election, and chastity is the contesting against a proud and an imperious lust, active flesh, and insinuating temptation. And what doth he resolve against, who can no more be tempted to the sin of unchastity, than he can return back again to his youth and vigor? And it is considerable, that since all the purposes of a holy life which a dying man can make, cannot be reduced to act; by what law, or reason, or covenant, or revelation, are we taught to distinguish the resolution of a dying man from the purposes of a living and vigorous person? Suppose a man in his youth and health, moved by consideration of the irregularity and deformity of sin, the danger of its productions, the wrath and displeasure of Almighty God, should resolve to leave the puddles of impurity, and walk in the paths of righteousnees; can this resolution alone put him into the state of grace? Is he admitted to pardon and the favor of God, because he hath in some measure performed actually what he so reasonably hath resolved? by no means. For resolution and purpose is, in its own nature and constitution, an imperfect act, and therefore can signify nothing without its performance and consummation. It is as a faculty is to the act, as spring is to the harvest, as seed-time is to the autumn, as eggs are to birds, or as a relative to its correspondent; nothing without it. And can it be imagined that a resolution in our health and life shall be effectual without performance? And shall a resolution, barely such, do any good on our death-bed? Can such purposes prevail against a long impiety, rather than against a young and a newly-begun state of sin? Will God at an easier rate pardon the sins of

fifty or sixty years, than the sins of our youth only, or the iniquity of five years, or ten? If a holy life be not necessary to be lived, why shall it be necessary to resolve to live in it? But if a holy life be necessary, then it cannot be sufficient merely to resolve it, unless this resolution go forth in an actual and real service. Vain therefore is the hope of those persons, who either go on in their sins before their last sickness, never thinking to return into the ways of God, from whence they have wandered all their life, never renewing their resolutions and vows of holy living; or if they have, yet their purposes are for ever blasted with the next violent temptation. More prudent was the prayer of David; 'Oh spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen.' And something like it was the saying of the emperor Charles the Fifth; *Inter vitæ negotia et mortis diem oportet spatium intercedere.* Whenever our holy purposes are renewed, unless God gives us time to act them, to mortify and subdue our lusts, to conquer and subdue the whole kingdom of sin, to rise from our grave, and be clothed with nerves and flesh and a new skin, to overcome our deadly sicknesses, and by little and little to return to health and strength; unless we have grace and time to do all this, our sins will lie down with us in our graves. For when a man hath contracted a long habit of sin, and it hath been growing on him ten or twenty, forty or fifty years, whose acts he hath daily or hourly repeated, and they are grown to a second nature to him,—and have so prevailed on the ruins of his spirit, that the man is taken captive by the devil at his will, he is fast bound, as a slave tugging at the oar; that he is grown in love with his fetters, and longs to be doing the work of sin;—is it likely, that after all this progress and growth in sin, in the ways of which he runs fast without any impediment;—is it, I say, likely that a few days or weeks of sickness can recover him? The special hinderances of that state I shall afterwand consider. But can a man be supposed so prompt to piety and holy living, a man, I mean, that hath lived wickedly a long time together; can he be of so ready and active a virtue on the sudden, as to recover, in a month or a week, what he hath been undoing in twenty or thirty years? Is it so easy to build, that a weak and infirm person, bound hand and foot, shall be able

to build more in three days than was a-building above forty years? Christ did it in a figurative sense: but in this, it is not in the power of any man so suddenly to be recovered from so long a sickness. Necessary therefore it is that all these instruments of our conversion, confession of sins,—praying for their pardon,—and resolution to lead a new life,—should begin, 'before our feet stumble on the dark mountains;' lest we leave the work only resolved on to be begun, which it is necessary we should in many degrees finish, if ever we mean to escape the eternal darkness. For that we should actually abolish the whole body of sin and death,—that we should crucify the old man with his lusts,—that we should lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us,—that we should cast away the works of darkness,—that we should awake from sleep, and arise from death,—that we should redeem the time,—that we should cleanse our hands and purify our hearts,—that we should have escaped the corruption (all the corruption) that is in the whole world through lust,—that nothing of the old leaven should remain in us,—but that we be wholly a new lump, thoroughly transformed and changed in the image of our mind; —these are the perpetual precepts of the Spirit, and the certain duty of man; and that to have all these in purpose only, is merely to no purpose, without the actual eradication of every vicious habit, and the certain abolition of every criminal adherence,—is clearly and dogmatically decreed every where in the Scripture. 'For,' (they are the words of St. Paul) 'they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;'* the work is actually done, and sin is dead or wounded mortally, before they can in any sense belong to Christ, to be a portion of his inheritance: and 'He that is in Christ, is a new creature.'† For 'in Christ Jesus nothing can avail but a new creature;'‡ nothing but a 'keeping the commandments of God.'§ Not all tears, though we should weep like David and his men at Ziklag, 'till they could weep no more,' or the women of Ramah, or like 'the weeping in the valley of Hinnom,' could suffice, if we retain the affection to any one sin; or have any unrepented of or unmortified. It is true that 'a

* Gal. v. 24. † Gal. vi. 15. ‡ Gal. v. 6. § 1 Cor. vii. 19.

contrite and a broken heart God will not despise :' no, he will not. For if it be a hearty and permanent sorrow, it is an excellent beginning of repentance; and God will to a timely sorrow give the grace of repentance: he will not give pardon to sorrow alone; but that which ought to be the proper effect of sorrow, that God shall give. He shall then open the gates of mercy, and admit you to a possibility of restitution: so that you may be within the covenant of repentance, which if you actually perform, you may expect God's promise. And in this sense confession will obtain our pardon, and humiliation will be accepted, and our holy purposes and pious resolutions shall be accounted for; that is, these being the first steps and addresses to that part of repentance which consists in the abolition of sins, shall be accepted so far as to procure so much of the pardon, to do so much of the work of restitution, that God will admit the returning man to a farther degree of emendation, to a nearer possibility of working out his salvation. But then, if this sorrow and confession, and these strong purposes, begin then when our life is declined towards the west, and is now ready to set in darkness and a dismal night; because of themselves they could but procure an admission to repentance, not at all to pardon and plenary absolution, by showing that on our death-bed these are too late and ineffectual, they call on us to begin betimes, when these imperfect acts may be consummate and perfect in the actual performing those parts of holy life, to which they were ordained in the nature of the thing, and the purposes of God.

4. Lastly, suppose all this be done, and that by a long course of strictness and severity, mortification and circumspection, we have overcome all our vicious and baser habits, contracted and grown on us like the ulcers and evils of a long surfeit, and that we are clean and swept; suppose that he hath wept and fasted, prayed and vowed to excellent purposes; yet all this is but the one half of repentance, so infinitely mistaken is the world, to think any thing to be enough to make up repentance: but to renew us, and restore us to the favor of God, there is required far more than what hath been yet accounted for. See it in the second of St. Peter, chap. i. vers. 4, 5. 'Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through

lust: and besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowlege, to knowlege temperance, to temperance patience, and so on, to godliness, to brotherly kindness, and to charity: these things must be in you and abound.' This is the sum total of repentance: we must not only have overcome sin, but we must after great diligence have acquired the habits of all those Christian graces, which are necessary in the transaction of our affairs, in all relations to God and our neighbor, and our own persons. It is not enough to say, 'Lord, I thank thee, I am no extortioner, no adulterer, not as this publican:' all the reward of such a penitent is, that when he hath escaped the corruption of the world, he hath also escaped those heavy judgments which threatened his ruin.

> 'Nec furtum feci, nec fugi,' si mihi dicat
> Servus, 'Habes pretium; loris non ureris,' aio:
> 'Non hominem occidi,'—'Non pasces in cruce corvos.'*

"If a servant have not robbed his master, nor offered to fly from his bondage, he shall escape the *furca*, his flesh shall not be exposed to birds or fishes;" but this is but the reward of innocent slaves. It may be, we have escaped the rod of the exterminating angel, when our sins are crucified: but we shall never 'enter into the joy of the Lord,' unless, after we have 'put off the old man with his affections and lusts,' we also 'put on the new man in righteousness and holiness of life.'† And this we are taught in most plain doctrine by St. Paul; 'Let us lay aside the weight that doth so easily beset us;' that is the one half: and then it follows, 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' These are the 'fruits meet for repentance,' spoken of by St. John Baptist; that is, when we renew our first undertaking in baptism, and return to our courses of innocence.

> Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens,
> Insanientis dum sapientiæ
> Consultus erro, nunc retrorsum
> Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
> Cogor relictos.‡

The sense of which words is well given us by St. John; 'Re-

* Hor. ep. i. 16. 46. † Heb. xii. 1. ‡ Hor. Od. i. 34. 1.

member whence thou art fallen; repent, and do thy first works.'* For all our hopes of heaven rely on that covenant which God made with us in baptism; which is, 'that being redeemed from our vain conversation, we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days.' Now when any of us hath prevaricated our part of the covenant, we must return to that state, and redeem the intermedial time spent in sin, by our doubled industry in the ways of grace: we must be reduced to our first estate, and make some proportionable returns of duty for our sad omissions, and great violations of our baptismal vow. For God having made no covenant with us but that which is consigned in baptism; in the same proportion in which we retain or return to that, in the same we are to expect the pardon of our sins, and all the other promises evangelical; but no otherwise, unless we can show a new gospel, or be baptised again by God's appointment. He, therefore, that by a long habit, by a state and continued course of sin, hath gone so far from his baptismal purity, as that he hath nothing of the Christian left on him but his name; that man hath much to do to make his garments clean, to purify his soul, to take off all the stains of sin, that his spirit may be presented pure to the eyes of God, who beholds no impurity. It is not an easy thing to cure a long-contracted habit of sin. Let any intemperate person but try in his own instance of drunkenness; or the swearer, in the sweetening his unwholesome language: but then so to command his tongue that he never swear, but that his speech be prudent, pious, and apt to edify the hearer, or in some sense to glorify God; or to become temperate, to have got a habit of sobriety, or chastity, or humility, is the work of a life. And if we do but consider, that he that lives well from his younger years, or takes up at the end of his youthful heats, and enters into the courses of a sober life early, diligently, and vigorously, shall find himself, after the studies and labors of twenty or thirty years' piety, but a very imperfect person, many degrees of pride left unrooted up, many inroads of intemperance or beginnings of excess, much indevotion and backwardness in religion, many temptations to contest against, and

* Revel. ii.

some infirmities which he shall never say he hath mastered; we shall find the work of a holy life is not to be deferred till our days are almost done, till our strengths are decayed, our spirits are weak, and our lust strong, our habits confirmed, and our longings after sin many and impotent: for what is very hard to be done, and is always done imperfectly, when there is length of time, and a less work to do, and more abilities to do it withal; when the time is short, and almost expired, and the work made difficult and vast, and the strengths weaker, and the faculties are disabled, will seem little less than absolutely impossible. I shall end this general consideration with the question of the Apostle; 'If the righteous scarcely be saved,' if it be so difficult to overcome our sins, and obtain virtuous habits; difficult, I say, to a righteous, a sober, and well-living person; 'where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' what shall become of him, who, by his evil life, hath not only removed himself from the affections, but even from the possibilities of virtue? He that hath lived in sin, will die in sorrow.

SERMON III.

PART II.

But I shall pursue this great and necessary truth, first, by showing what parts and ingredients of repentance are assigned, when it is described in Holy Scripture: secondly, by showing the necessities, the absolute necessities, of a holy life, and what it means in Scripture to 'live holily:' thirdly, by considering what directions or intimations we have concerning the last time of beginning to repent; and what is the longest period that any man may venture with safety. And in the prosecution of these particulars, we shall remove the objections, those aprons of fig-leaves, which men use for their shelter to palliate their sin, and to hide themselves from that from which no rocks or moun-

tains shall protect them, though they fall on them; that is, the wrath of God.

First, That repentance is not only an abolition and extinction of the body of sin, a bringing it to the altar, and slaying it before God and all the people; but that we must also χρυσὸν κέρασι περιχεύειν, "mingle gold and rich presents," the oblation of good works and holy habits with the sacrifice, I have already proved: but now if we will see repentance in its stature and integrity of constitution described, we shall find it to be the one-half of all that which God requires of Christians. Faith and repentance are the whole duty of a Christian. Faith is a sacrifice of the understanding to God; repentance sacrifices the whole will: that gives the knowing; this gives up all the desiring faculties: that makes us disciples; this makes us servants of the holy Jesus. Nothing else was preached by the Apostles, nothing was enjoined as the duty of man, nothing else did build up the body of Christian religion. So that as faith contains all that knowlege which is necessary to salvation, so repentance comprehends in it all the whole practice and working duty of a returning Christian. And this was the sum total of all that St. Paul preached to the Gentiles, when, in his farewell sermon to the bishops and priests of Ephesus, he professed that he 'kept back nothing that was profitable' to them;* and yet it was all nothing but this, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' So that whosoever believes in Jesus Christ and repents towards God, must make his accounts according to this standard, that is, to believe all that Christ taught him, and to do all that Christ commanded. And this is remarked in St. Paul's catechism,† where he gives a more particular catalogue of fundamentals: he reckons nothing but sacraments and faith; of which he enumerates two principal articles, 'resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.' Whatsoever is practical, all the whole duty of man, the practice of all obedience, is called 'repentance from dead works:' which, if we observe the singularity of the phrase, does not mean 'sorrow;' for sorrow from dead works is not sense; but it must mean *mutationem status*, a conversion from

* Acts xx. 21. † Heb. vi. 1.

dead works, which, as in all motions, supposes two terms; from dead works to living works; from 'the death of sin' to 'the life of righteousness.'

I will add but two places more, out of each Testament one; in which, I suppose, you may see every lineament of this great duty described, that you may no longer mistake a grasshopper for an eagle, sorrow and holy purposes for the intire duty of repentance. In Ezekiel, xviii. 21. you shall find it thus described: 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Or, as it is more fully described in Ezekiel, xxxiii. 14. 'When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he hath robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Here only is the condition of pardon; to leave all your sins, to keep all God's statutes, to walk in them, to abide, to proceed, and make progress in them; and this, without the interruption by a deadly sin,—'without committing iniquity,'—to make restitution of all the wrongs he hath done, all the unjust money he hath taken, all the oppressions he hath committed, all that must be satisfied for, and repaid according to our ability: we must make satisfaction for all injury to our neighbor's fame, all wrongs done to his soul; he must be restored to that condition of good things thou didst in any sense remove him from: when this is done according to thy utmost power, then thou hast repented truly, then thou hast a title to the promise; 'Thou shalt surely live, thou shalt not die,' for thy old sins thou hast formerly committed. Only be pleased to observe this one thing; that this place of Ezekiel is it, which is so often mistaken for that common saying, 'At what time soever a sinner repents him of his sins from the bottom of his heart, I will put all his wickedness out of my remembrance, saith the Lord.' For although 'at what time soever a sinner does repent,' as repentance is now explained, God will forgive him,—and that repentance, as it is now stated, cannot be done, 'at what time soever,' not on a man's death-bed; yet there are no such words in the whole Bible, nor any nearer to the sense

of them, than the words I have now read to you out of the prophet Ezekiel. Let that, therefore, no more deceive you, or be made a color to countenance a persevering sinner, or a death-bed penitent.

Neither is the duty of repentance to be bought at an easier rate in the New Testament. You may see it described in 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance.' Well! but what is that repentance which is so wrought? This it is: 'Behold this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!' These are the fruits of that sorrow that is effectual; these are the parts of repentance: 'clearing ourselves' of all that is past, and great 'carefulness' for the future; 'anger' at ourselves for our old sins, and 'fear' lest we commit the like again: 'vehement desires' of pleasing God, and 'zeal' of holy actions, and a 'revenge' on ourselves for our sins, called by St. Paul, in another place, 'a judging ourselves, lest we be judged of the Lord.'* And in pursuance of this truth, the primitive church did not admit a sinning person to the public communions with the faithful, till, besides their sorrow, they had spent some years in an ἀγαθοεργία, in 'doing good works,' and holy living; and especially in such actions which did contradict that wicked inclination. which led them into those sins, whereof they were now admitted to repent. And therefore, we find that they stood in the station of penitents seven years, thirteen years, and sometimes till their death, before they could be reconciled to the peace of God, and his holy church.

——— Scelerum si bene pœnitet,
Eradenda cupidinis
Pravi sunt elementa; et teneræ nimis
Mentes asperioribus
Formandæ studiis.†

Repentance is the institution of a philosophical and severe life, an utter extirpation of all unreasonableness and impiety,

* 1 Cor. xi. 31. † Hor. Od. iii. 24. 50.

and an address to, and a final passing through, all the parts of holy living.

Now consider, whether this be imaginable or possible to be done on our death-bed, when a man is frighted into an involuntary, a sudden, and unchosen piety. Ὁ μετανοῶν οὐ φόβῳ τῶν ἐναντίων τὴν τοῦ κακοῦ πρᾶξιν αἱρήσεται, saith Hierocles.* He that never repents till a violent fear be on him, till he apprehend himself to be in the jaws of death, ready to give up his unready and unprepared accounts, till he sees the Judge sitting in all the addresses of dreadfulness and majesty, just now, as he believes, ready to pronounce that fearful and intolerable sentence of, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;' this man does nothing for the love of God, nothing for the love of virtue: it is just as a condemned man repents that he was a traitor; but repented not till he was arrested, and sure to die: such a repentance as this may still consist with as great an affection to sin as ever he had;† and, it is no thanks to him, if, when the knife is at his throat, then he gives good words and flatters. But, suppose this man in his health, and in the midst of all his lust, it is evident that there are some circumstances of action, in which the man would have refused to commit his most pleasing sin. Would not the son of Tarquin have refused to ravish Lucretia, if Junius Brutus had been by him? Would the impurest person in the world act his lust in the market-place? or drink off an intemperate goblet, if a dagger were placed at his throat? In these circumstances their fear would make them declare against the present acting their impurities. But does this cure the intemperance of their affections? Let the impure person retire to his closet, and Junius Brutus be engaged in a far-distant war, and the dagger be taken from the drunkard's throat, and the fear of shame, or death, or judgment, be taken from them all; and they shall no more resist their temptation, than they could before remove their fear: and you may as well judge the other persons holy, and haters of their sin, as the man on his death-bed to be penitent; and rather they than he,

* ἡ δὲ μετάνοια αὕτη φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ γίνεται, καὶ τῶν ἀνοήτων ἔργων τε καὶ λόγων φυγή, καὶ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς ἡ πρώτη παρασκευή. Hierocles, Needham, p. 126.

† See Life of Jesus, Disc. of Repentance, part 2.

by how much this man's fear, the fear of death, and of the infinite pains of hell, the fear of a provoked God, and an angry eternal Judge, are far greater than the apprehensions of a public shame, or an abused husband, or the poniard of an angry person. These men then sin not, because they dare not; they are frighted from the act, but not from the affection; which is not to be cured but by discourse, and reasonable acts, and human considerations; of which that man is not naturally capable, who is possessed with the greatest fear, the fear of death and damnation. If there had been time to curse his sin, and to live the life of grace, I deny not but God might have begun his conversion with so great a fear, that he should never have wiped off its impression:* but if the man dies then, dies when he only declaims against, and curses his sin, as being the author of his present fear and apprehended calamity; it is very far from reconciling him to God or hopes of pardon, because it proceeds from a violent,† unnatural, and an intolerable cause; no act of choice, or virtue, but of sorrow, a deserved sorrow, and a miserable, unchosen, unavoidable fear;

—— moriensque recepit
Quas nollet victurus aquas——

He curses sin on his death-bed, and makes a panegyric of virtue, which, in his life-time, he accounted folly, and trouble, and needless vexation.

Quæ mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit?
Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genæ?‡

I shall end this first consideration with a plain exhortation; that since repentance is a duty of so great and giant-like bulk, let no man crowd it up into so narrow room, as that it be strangled in its birth for want of time, and air to breathe in; let it not be put off to that time when a man hath scarce time enough to reckon all those particular duties which make up the integrity of its constitution. Will any man hunt the wild boar

* Cogimur a suetis animum suspendere rebus;
Atque ut vivamus, vivere desinimus. Cornel. Gal.

† Nec ad rem pertinet ubi inciperet, quod placuerat ut fieret.

‡ Hor. Od. iv. 10. 7.

in his garden, or bait a bull in his closet? Will a woman wrap her child in her handkerchief, or a father send his son to school when he is fifty years old? These are indecencies of providence, and the instrument contradicts the end: and this is our case. There is no room for the repentance, no time to act all its essential parts; and a child, who hath a great way to go before he be wise, may defer his studies, and hope to become learned in his old age, and on his death-bed, as well as a vicious person may think to recover from all his ignorances and prejudicate opinions, from all his false principles and evil customs, from his wicked inclinations and ungodly habits, from his fondnesses of vice and detestations of virtue, from his promptness to sin and unwillingness to grace, from his spiritual deadness and strong sensuality, on his death-bed (I say), when he hath no natural strength, and as little spiritual; when he is criminal and impotent, hardened in his vice and soft in his fears, full of passion and empty of wisdom; when he is sick and amazed, and timorous and confounded, and impatient, and extremely miserable.

And now, when any of you is tempted to commit a sin, remember that sin will ruin you, unless you repent of it. But this, you say, is no news, and so far from affrighting you from sin, that, God knows, it makes men sin the rather. For, therefore, they venture to act the present temptation, because they know, if they repent, God will forgive them; and therefore they resolve on both, to sin now, and repent hereafter.

Against this folly I shall not oppose the consideration of their danger, and that they neither know how long they shall live, nor whether they shall die or no in this very act of sin; though this consideration is very material, and if they should die in it, or before it is washed off, they perish; but I consider these things: 1. that he that resolves to sin on a resolution to repent, by every act of sin makes himself more incapable of repenting, by growing more in love with sin, by remembering its pleasures, by serving it once more, and losing one degree more of the liberty of our spirit. And if you resolve to sin now, because it is pleasant, how do you know that your appetite will alter? Will it not appear pleasant to you next week,

and the next week after that, and so for ever? And still you sin, and still you will repent; that is, you will repent when the sin can please you no longer; for so long as it can please you, so long you are tempted not to repent, as well as now to act the sin; and the longer you lie in it, the more you will love it: so that it is in effect to say, I love my sin now, but I will hereafter hate it; only I will act it awhile longer, and grow more in love with it, and then I will repent; that is, then I will be sure to hate it, when I shall most love it. 2. To repent, signifies to be sorrowful, to be ashamed, and to wish it had never been done. And then see the folly of this temptation; I would not sin, but that I hope to repent of it: that is, I would not do this thing, but that I hope to be sorrowful for doing it, and I hope to come to shame for it, heartily to be ashamed of my doings, and I hope to be in that condition that I would give all the world I had never done it; that is, I hope to feel and apprehend an evil infinitely greater than the pleasures of my sin. And are these arguments fit to move a man to sin? What can affright a man from it, if these invite him to it? It is as if a man should invite one to be a partner of his treason, by telling him, If you will join with me, you shall have all these effects by it: you shall be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and your blood shall be corrupted, and your estate forfeited, and you shall have many other reasons to wish you had never done it. He that should use this rhetoric in earnest, might well be accounted a madman: this is to scare a man, not to allure him: and so is the other when we understand it truly. 3. For I consider, he that repents, wishes he had never done that sin. Now I ask, does he wish so on reason or without reason? Surely, if he may, when he hath satisfied his lust, ask God pardon, and be admitted on as easy terms for the time to come, as if he had not done the sin, he hath no reason to be sorrowful, or wish he had not done it. For though he hath done it, and pleased himself by 'enjoying the pleasure of sin for a season,' yet all is well again; and let him only be careful now, and there is no hurt done, his pardon is certain. How can any man, that understands the reason of his actions and passions, wish that he had never done that sin in which then he had pleasure, and now he feels no worse inconvenience?

But he that truly repents, wishes and would give all the world he had never done it: surely then his present condition in respect of his past sin hath some very great evil in it; why else should he be so much troubled? True, and this it is. He that hath committed sins after baptism, is fallen out of the favor of God, is tied to hard duty for the time to come, to cry vehemently unto God, to call night and day for pardon, to be in great fear and tremblings of heart, lest God should never forgive him, lest God will never take off his sentence of eternal pains; and in this fear, and in some degrees of it, he will remain all the days of his life: and if he hopes to be quit of that, yet he knows not how many degrees of God's anger still hang over his head; how many sad miseries shall afflict, and burn, and purify him in this world, with a sharpness so poignant as to divide the marrow from the bones; and for these reasons, as a considering man that knows what it is to repent, wishes with his soul he had never sinned, and therefore grieves in proportion to his former crimes, and present misery, and future danger.

And now suppose that you can repent when you will, that is, that you can grieve when you will; though no man can do it, no man can grieve when he please, though he could shed tears when he list, he cannot grieve without a real or apprehended felicity; but, suppose it;—and that he can fear when he please, and that he can love when he please, or what he please; that is, suppose a man be able to say to his palate, Though I love sweetmeats, yet to-morrow will I hate and loathe them, and believe them bitter and distasteful things; suppose, I say, all these impossibilities; yet since repentance does suppose a man to be in a state of such real misery, that he hath reason to curse the day in which he sinned, is this a fit argument to invite a man that is in his wits to sin? to sin in hope of repentance? as if danger of falling into hell, and fear of the divine anger, and many degrees of the divine judgments, and a lasting sorrow, and a perpetual labor, and a never-ceasing trembling, and a troubled conscience, and a sorrowful spirit, were fit things to be desired or hoped for.

The sum is this: he that commits sins shall perish eternally, if he never does repent. And, if he does repent, and yet un-

timely, he is not the better; and if he does not repent with an intire, a perfect, and complete repentance, he is not the better. But if he does, yet repentance is a duty full of fears, and sorrow, and labor; a vexatiou to the spirit; an afflictive, penal, or punitive duty; a duty which suffers for sin, and labors for grace, which abides and suffers little images of hell in the way to heaven: and though it be the only way to felicity, yet it is beset with thorns and daggers of sufferance, and with rocks and mountains of duty. Let no man therefore dare to sin on the hopes of repentance; for he is a fool and a hypocrite that now chooses and approves what he knows hereafter he must condemn.

2. The second general consideration is, the necessity, the absolute necessity, of holy living. God hath made a covenant with us, that we must give up ourselves, 'bodies' and souls, not a dying, but 'a living' and healthful 'sacrifice.'* He hath forgiven all our old sins, and we have bargained to quit them, from the time that we first come to Christ, and give our names to him, and to keep all his commandments. We have taken the sacramental oath, like that of the old Roman militia, *πειθαρχήσειν, καὶ ποιήσειν τὸ προσταττόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων κατὰ δύναμιν*, we must "believe," and "obey," and "do all that is commanded us," and keep our station, and fight against the flesh, the world, and the devil, not to throw away our military girdle; and we are to do what is bidden us, or to die for it, even all that is bidden us, "according to our power." For, pretend not that God's commandments are impossible. It is dishonorable to think God enjoins us to do more than he enables us to do; and it is a contradiction to say we cannot do all that we can; and 'through Christ which strengthens me, I can do all things,' saith St. Paul. However, we can do to the utmost of our strength, and beyond that we cannot take thought; impossibilities enter not into deliberation; but, according to our abilities and natural powers, assisted by God's grace, so God hath covenanted with us to live a holy life. 'For in Christ Jesus nothing availeth but a new creature, nothing but faith working by charity, nothing but keeping the commandments of

* Rom. xii. 1.

God.' They are all the words of St. Paul before quoted; to which he adds, 'and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy.' This is the covenant, 'they are the Israel of God:' on those 'peace and mercy' shall abide. If they become a new creature, wholly 'transformed in the image of their mind;' if they have faith, and this faith be an operative working faith, a faith that produces a holy life, 'a faith that works by charity;' if they 'keep the commandments of God,' then they are within the covenant of mercy, but not else: for 'in Christ Jesus nothing else availeth.' To the same purpose are those words, (Heb. xii. 14.) 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' 'Peace with all men,' implies both justice and charity, without which it is impossible to preserve peace: 'holiness' implies all our duty towards God, universal diligence: and this must be 'followed,' that is, pursued with diligence, in a lasting course of life and exercise: and without this we shall never see the face of God. I need urge no more authorities to this purpose; these two are as certain and convincing as two thousand: and since thus much is actually required, and is the condition of the covenant; it is certain that sorrow for not having done what is commanded to be done, and a purpose to do what is necessary to be actually performed, will not acquit us before the righteous judgment of God. 'For the grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live godly, justly, and soberly, in this present world.' For on these terms alone we must 'look for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'* I shall no longer insist on this particular, but only propound it to your consideration. To what purpose are all those commandments in Scripture, of every page almost in it, of living holily, and according to the commandments of God,—of adorning the gospel of God,—of walking as in the day,—of walking in light,—of pure and undefiled religion,—of being holy as God is holy,—of being humble and meek as Christ is humble,—of putting on the Lord Jesus,—of living a spiritual life,—but that it is the purpose of God, and

* Tit. ii. 11, 12.

the intention and design of Christ dying for us, and the covenant made with man, that we should expect heaven on no other terms in the world but of a holy life, in the faith and obedience of the Lord Jesus?

Now if a vicious person, when he comes to the latter end of his days, one that hath lived a wicked, ungodly life, can, for any thing he can do on his death-bed, be said to live a holy life; then his hopes are not desperate: but he that hopes on this only, for which God hath made him no promise, I must say of him as Galen said of consumptive persons, ᾗ πλέον ἐλπίζουσιν, ταύτῃ μᾶλλον κακῶς ἔχουσι, "the more they hope, the worse they are:" and the relying on such hopes is an approach to the grave and a sad eternity.

Peleos et Priami transit, vel Nestoris ætas,
Et fuerat serum jam tibi desinere.
Eja age, rumpe moras; quo te sperabimus usque?
Dum, quid sis dubitas, jam potes esse nihil.*

And now it will be a vain question to ask, whether or no God cannot save a dying man that repents after a vicious life. For it is true, God can do it if he please, and he 'can raise children to Abraham out of the stones,' and he can make ten thousand worlds, if he sees good; and he can do what he list, and he can save an ill-living man though he never repent at all, so much as on his death-bed: all this can he do. But God's power is no ingredient into this question: we are never the better that God can do it, unless he also will: and whether he will or no, we are to learn from himself, and what he hath declared to be his will in Holy Scripture. Nay, since God hath said, that 'without actual holiness no man shall see God,' God by his own will hath restrained his power; and though absolutely he can do all things, yet he cannot do against his own word. And, indeed, the rewards of heaven are so great and glorious, and Christ's 'burden is so light, his yoke is so easy,' that is a shameless impudence to expect so great glories at a less rate than so little a service, at a lower rate than a holy life. It cost the eternal Son of God his life's blood to obtain

* Martial, ii. 64.

heaven for us on that condition: and who then shall die again for us, to get heaven for us on easier conditions? What would you do, if God should command you to kill your eldest son, or to work in the mines for a thousand years together, or to fast all thy life-time with bread and water? were not heaven a great bargain even after all this? And when God requires nothing of us but to live soberly, justly, and godly,—which very things of themselves to men are a very great felicity, and necessary to his present well-being,—shall we think this to be a load, and an insufferable burden? and that heaven is so little a purchase at that price, that God in mere justice will take a death-bed sigh or groan, and a few unprofitable tears and promises, in exchange for all our duty? Strange it should be so: but stranger, that any man should rely on such a vanity, when from God's word he hath nothing to warrant such a confidence. But these men do like the tyrant Dionysius, who stole from Apollo his golden cloak, and gave him a cloak of Arcadian homespun, saying, that this was lighter in summer, and warmer in winter. These men sacrilegiously rob God of the service of all their golden days, and serve him in their hoary head, in their furs and grave-clothes, and pretend that this late service is more agreeable to the divine mercy on one side, and human infirmity on the other, and so dispute themselves into an irrecoverable condition; having no other ground to rely on a death-bed or late-begun repentance, but because they resolve to enjoy the pleasures of sin: and for heaven, they will put that to the venture of an after-game. These men sow in the flesh, and would reap in the Spirit; live to the devil, and die to God: and therefore, it is but just in God that their hopes should be desperate, and their craft be folly, and their condition be the unexpected, unfeared inheritance of an eternal sorrow.

3. Lastly; our last inquiry is into the time, the last or latest time of beginning our repentance. Must a man repent a year or two, or seven years, or ten, or twenty, before his death? or what is the last period, after which all repentance will be untimely and ineffectual? To this captious question I have many things to oppose: 1. we have entered into covenant with God, to serve him from the day of our baptism to the day

of our death. He hath 'sworn this oath to us, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered from fear of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'* Now although God will not τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης καὶ κοινῆς ἀσθενείας ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι, "forget our infirmities," but pass by the nakednesses of an honest, a watchful, and industrious person; yet the covenant he makes with us, is from the day of our first voluntary profession to our grave; and according as we by sins retire from our first undertaking, so our condition is insecure: there is no other covenant made with us, no new beginnings of another period; but if we be returned, and sin be cancelled, and grace be actually obtained, then we are in the first condition of pardon: but because it is uncertain when a man can have mastered his vices, and obtained the graces, therefore no man can tell any set time when he must begin. 2. Scripture, describing the duty of repenting sinners, names no other time but 'to-day:' 'to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' 3. The duty of a Christian is described in Scripture to be such as requires length of time, and a continual industry. 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us:' and 'consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.'† So great a preparation is not for the agony and contention of an hour, or a day, or a week, but for the whole life of a Christian, or for great parts of its abode. 4. There is a certain period and time set for repentance, and beyond that all our industry is ineffectual. There is a 'day of visitation, our own day;' and there is 'a day of visitation,' that is 'God's day.' This appeared in the case of Jerusalem: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hadst known the time of thy visitation, at least in this thy day!' Well, they neglected it; and then there was a time of God's visitation, which was 'his day,' called in Scripture 'the day of the Lord;' and because they had neglected their own day, they fell into inevitable ruin: no repentance could have prevented their final ruin. And this, which was true in a nation, is also clearly affirmed true in the case of single persons.

* Luke i. 73, 74. † Heb. xii. 1. 3.

'Look diligently, lest any fail of the grace of God; lest there be any person among you as Esau, who sold his birth-right, and afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for his repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.'* Esau had time enough to repent his bargain as long as he lived; he wept sorely for his folly, and carefulness sat heavy on his soul; and yet he was not heard, nor his repentance accepted; for the time was past. And 'take heed,' saith the Apostle, lest it come to pass to any of you to be in the same case. Now if ever there be a time in which repentance is too late, it must be the time of our death-bed, and the last time of our life. And after a man is fallen into the displeasure of Almighty God, the longer he lies in his sin without repentance and emendation, the greater is his danger, and the more of his allowed time is spent; and no man can antecedently, or beforehand, be sure that the time of his repentance is not past; and those who neglect the call of God, and refuse to hear him call in the day of grace, 'God will laugh at them when their calamity comes: they shall call, and the Lord shall not hear them.' And this was the case of the five foolish virgins, when the arrest of death surprised them: they discovered their want of oil; they were troubled at it; they begged oil; they were refused; they did something towards the procuring of the oil of grace, for they went out to buy oil: and, after all this stir, the Bridegroom came before they had finished their journey, and they were shut out from the communion of the Bridegroom's joys.

Therefore, concerning the time of beginning to repent, no man is certain but he that hath done his work. *Mortem venientem nemo hilaris excipit, nisi qui se ad eam diu composuerat,* said Seneca:† "He only dies cheerfully, who stood waiting for death in a ready dress of a long preceding preparation." He that repents to-day, repents late enough that he did not begin yesterday: but he that puts it off till to-morrow, is vain and miserable.

———— hodie jam vivere, Postume, serum est:
Ille sapit, quisquis, Postume, vixit heri.‡

* Heb. xii. 15, &c. † Epist. 30. ‡ Mart. v. 59.

Well; but what will you have a man do that hath lived wickedly, and is now cast on his death-bed? shall this man despair, and neglect all the actions of piety, and the instrument of restitution in his sickness? No, God forbid. Let him do what he can then; it is certain it will be little enough; for all those short gleams of piety and flashes of lightning will help towards alleviating some degrees of misery; and if the man recover, they are good beginnings of a renewed piety: and Ahab's tears and humiliation, though it went no farther, had a proportion of reward, though nothing to the proportions of eternity. So that he that says, it is every day necessary to repent, cannot be supposed to discourage the piety of any day: a death-bed piety, when things are come to that sad condition, may have many good purposes: therefore, even then neglect nothing that can be done. Well; but shall such persons despair of salvation? To them I shall only return this: that they are to consider the conditions, which, on one side, God requires of us; and, on the other side, whether they have done accordingly. Let them consider on what terms God hath promised salvation, and whether they have made themselves capable, by performing their part of the obligation. If they have not, I must tell them, that, not to hope where God hath made no promise, is not the sin of despair, but the misery of despair. A man hath no ground to hope, that ever he shall be made an angel, and yet that not hoping is not to be called despair: and no man can hope for heaven without repentance; and for such a man to despair, is not the sin, but the misery. If such persons have a promise of heaven, let them show it, and hope it, and enjoy it: if they have no promise, they must thank themselves, for bringing themselves into a condition without the covenant, without a promise, hopeless and miserable.

But will not trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ save such a man? For that, we must be tried by the word of God, in which there is no contract at all made with a dying person, that lived in name a Christian, in practice a heathen: and we shall dishonor the sufferings and redemption of our blessed Saviour, if we think them to be an umbrella to shelter impious and ungodly living. But that no such person may, after a wicked life, repose himself on his death-bed on Christ's merits, observe but these two places of Scripture: 'Our Saviour, Jesus Christ,

who gave himself for us'*—what to do? that we might live as we list, and hope to be saved by his merits? no:—but 'that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort,' saith St. Paul. But, more plainly yet in St. Peter; 'Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree,'—to what end? 'that we, being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness.'† Since therefore our living a holy life is the end of Christ's dying that sad and holy death for us, he that trusts on it to evil purposes, and to excuse his vicious life, does, as much as lies in him, make void the very purpose and design of Christ's passion, and dishonors the blood of the everlasting covenant; which covenant was confirmed by the blood of Christ; but, as it brought peace from God, so it requires a holy life from us.‡

But why may not we be saved, as well as the thief on the cross? even because our case is nothing alike. When Christ dies once more for us, we may look for such another instance; not till then. But this thief did but then come to Christ, he knew him not before; and his case was, as if a Turk, or heathen, should be converted to Christianity, and be baptised, and enter newly into the covenant on his death-bed: then God pardons all his sins. And so God does to Christians when they are baptised, or first give up their names to Christ by a voluntary confirmation of their baptismal vow: but when they have once entered into the covenant, they must perform what they promise, and do what they are obliged. The thief had made no contract with God in Jesus Christ, and therefore failed of none; only the defailances of the state of ignorance Christ paid for at the thief's admission: but we, that have made a covenant with God in baptism, and failed of it all our days, and then return at 'night, when we cannot work,' have nothing to plead for ourselves; because we have made all that to be useless to us, which God, with so much mercy and miraculous wisdom, gave us to secure our interest and hopes of heaven.

And therefore, let no Christian man, who hath covenanted with God to give him the service of his life, think that God

* Titus, ii. 14. † 1 Pet. ii. 24.

‡ See Life of Jesus, Disc. of Repentance, part 2.

will be answered with the sighs and prayers of a dying man: for all that great obligation, which lies on us, cannot be transacted in an instant, when we have loaded our souls with sin, and made them empty of virtue; we cannot so soon grow up to 'a perfect man in Christ Jesus:' *οὐδὲν τῶν μεγάλων ἄφνω γίνεται.** You cannot have an apple or a cherry, but you must stay its proper periods, and let it blossom and knot, and grow and ripen; 'and in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,' saith the Apostle: far much less may we expect that the fruits of repentance, and the issues and degrees of holiness, shall be gathered in a few days or hours. *Γνώμης δ' ἀνθρώπου καρπὸν θέλεις οὕτω δι' ὀλίγου καὶ εὐκόλως κτήσασθαι.* You must not expect such fruits in a little time, nor with little labor.

Suffer not therefore yourselves to be deceived by false principles and vain confidences: for no man can in a moment root out the long-contracted habits of vice, nor on his death-bed make use of all that variety of preventing, accompanying, and persevering grace, which God gave to man in mercy, because man would need it all; because without it he could not be saved; nor, on his death-bed, can he exercise the duty of mortification, nor cure his drunkenness then, nor his lust, by any act of Christian discipline, nor run with patience, nor 'resist unto blood,' nor 'endure with long-sufferance;' but he can pray, and groan, and call to God, and resolve to live well when he is dying. But this is but just as the nobles of Xerxes, when in a storm they were to lighten the ship to preserve their king's life; they did *προσκυνέοντας ἐπιπηδᾷν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν*, they "did their obeisance, and leaped into the sea:" so, I fear, do these men pray, and mourn, and worship, and so leap overboard into an ocean of eternal and intolerable calamity: from which God deliver us, and all faithful people.

Hunc volo laudari qui sine morte potest.†
Vivere quod propero pauper, nec inutilis annis,
Da veniam; properat vivere nemo satis.
Differat hoc, patrios optat qui vincere census,
Atriaque immodicis arctat imaginibus.‡

* Arrian, Epictet. l. i. c. 15.
† Martial, i. 9. 6.
‡ Martial, ii. 90. 3.

SUMMARY OF SERMON IV.

JEREMIAH, CHAP. XVII.—VERSE 9.

PART I.

FOLLY and subtilty divide the greatest part of mankind: some are crafty enough to deceive, others foolish enough to be cozened: and yet the scales also turn; for they that are most crafty to cozen others, are often the veriest fools: they rob their neighbor of his money, and lose their own innocency; disturb his rest, and vex their own conscience; throw him into prison, and themselves into hell, &c. Origin and progress of man's ignorant, helpless, and miserable condition described. The feebleness and wretchedness of those external aids, on which he too often relies, exposed; also of that, to which he too often turns, when he has experienced their impotence; namely, his own heart, *which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* Deceitfulness of the heart may be reduced to two heads: a man sometimes deceives because he is false, and a staff because it is weak; but the heart because it is both. One sort of deceitfulness is its calamity, and the other its iniquity, which is the worse calamity of the two.

1. The heart is deceitful in its strength: when we have the growth of a man, we have the weakness of a child; the more advanced we are in age, the weaker are we in courage. The forward heat in new converts, and its subsequent coolness, described. This applied to the primitive church, and to the same in after times. This weakness of our heart accounted for, by our letting in the dominion of lusts, &c. Our unwillingness to pray is a great sign of our spiritual weakness.

And yet this weak heart is strong in passions, violent in desires, irresistible in its appetites, &c. This compared to the strength of a man in a fever or delirium; the strength not of health, but of fury and disease.

Examination of a heart that yields to the temptation of its lusts. Such a heart deceives a man, not because it cannot resist the temptation, but because it will not set about it; for it is certain that the heart can, if it list: this shown in various instances. The heart is deceitful in managing its natural strengths: it is naturally and physically strong, but morally weak and impotent.

2. The heart of man is deceitful in making judgment concerning its own acts: it does not know when it is pleased or displeased; it is peevish and trifling; it would and it would not, &c. Suppose a man that hath spent his younger years in vanity and folly, and is by the grace of God apprehensive of it, and thinks of returning to sober counsels: this man will find his heart so false, subtle, and secret, that it will be hard to learn whether he repents or no: this shown, and the subject enlarged on.

So deceitful is our heart in this matter of repentance, that spiritual masters are fain to invent suppletory arts and stratagems to secure the duty: and we are advised to mourn, because we do not mourn; to be sorrowful, because we are not so. Now if we be sorrowful in the first stage, how is it that we know it not? Is our heart so secret to ourselves? But if we be not sorrowful in the first period, how shall we be so, or how know it, in the second? We may as well be sorrowful in the third place, for want of sorrow in the second, &c.: so that we shall never be secure in this artifice, if we be not certain of our natural and hearty passion in our direct and first apprehensions.

Thus many persons think themselves in a good state, and

make no question of their salvation; being confident, only because they are confident; and they are so, because they are bid to be so; and yet they are not so at all, but extremely timorous and fearful: for how many, who say they are sure of salvation, dare to die? So deceived is the heart in its own acts and opinions.

3. The heart is deceitful in its own resolutions and purposes: for many times men make their resolutions only in their understandings, not in their will, &c. But suppose them advanced farther, their will and choice also being determined; see how the heart deceives them. 1. They resolve against those sins that please them not, or where temptation is not present; or they think by great zeal against some sins to gain an indulgence for others: this illustrated. 2. They resolve against sin, that is, they will not act it in the same circumstances as formerly: this explained. 3. They resolve against it when the opportunity is slipped, and lay it aside as long as the temptation shall please; even till it come again, and no longer: this enlarged on.

4. The heart is false, deceiving, and deceived, in its intentions and designs. A man hears the precept of God, enjoining us to give alms of all we possess: he readily obeys, and his charity appears lovely; but there is a canker at the heart: he blows a trumpet to call the poor together, and hopes the neighborhood will take notice of his bounty. A man with a true story may be malicious to his enemy, and by doing himself right may do him wrong. Some men pursue virtue with great earnestness, but cannot with patience look on it in another; where it is plain that reputation, not virtue, is the thing desired: and yet if you were to tell a man so, he would charge you with malice and detraction. It is easy to distinguish these things in precepts; but when the heart comes to separate alms from charity, God's glory from human praise,

sincerity from hypocrisy, &c. it so implicates the question, and confounds the ends, that we have reason to think our best actions sullied by some excrescences.

Here, one would think, were enough to abate our confidence and the spirit of pride; to make us constantly stand on our guard, and keep a strict watch on our own hearts, as our greatest enemies from without. Concluding exhortations.

PART II.

Epictetus observes, that "it is the beginning of wisdom to know a man's weaknesses and failings, in things of greatest necessity:" and we have here so many objects to furnish out this knowlege, that we find it the longest and the latest, before it can be obtained. Our hearts are blind, or our hearts are hardened: they do not see, or they will not see, the ways of God.

I. Our hearts are blind, wilfully blind. This ignorance is taken in on design. God hath opened all the windows of heaven, and sent the Sun of righteousness, and discovered the abysses of his own wisdom; he has made the second person of the Trinity to convey his precepts, and the third to inscribe the doctrine on the book of our hearts; with miracles and prophecies to be its arguments, and the whole world to be the verification of it, &c. This hath God done for us; and what do we for him? We stand in our own light, and quench that of God: we love darkness more than light, and act accordingly: this topic enlarged on.

To be more particular, the heart of man uses devices that it may be ignorant.

1. We are impatient of honest and severe reproof; ordering the circumstances of our persons and addresses, so that we

shall never come to the true knowlege of our condition: this shown. Our heart is so impatient of seeing its own stains, that, like the elephant, it tramples in the pure streams before it drinks, in order that by muddying them it may not see its own deformity.

2. In order to this, we heap up teachers of our own, and they guide us, not whither, but which way, they please: for we are curious to go our own way, and careless of our hospital or inn at night. A fair way, and a merry company, and a pleasant easy guide, will entice us into the enemy's quarters; and such guides we cannot want. "If we have a mind to be wicked, we shall want no prompters:" this topic enlarged on.

3. But the heart of man hath yet another stratagem to secure its iniquity by means of ignorance; and that is incogitancy or inconsideration. The grace of God is armor and defence enough against the most violent incursion of the spirits and works of darkness; but then we must hear its excellent charms, consider its reasons, remember its precepts, and dwell with its discourses: but this the heart of man loves not. If such incogitancy comes to be habitual, as it is in many men,—first, by resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit, then by quenching him,—we shall find the consequence to be, first an indifferency; next a dulness; then a lethargy; then a hatred of the ways of God, which commonly ends in a wretchedness of spirit, to be manifested on our death-bed, &c. Indifference to religion still farther descanted on. The effect of all which is, that we are ignorant of the things of God; we make religion to be the work of a few hours in the whole year; and are without any appetite or affection for the severities of a holy life, &c.

II. But the heart is not only blind, but hard also. Not only folly, but mischief also, is bound up in the heart of man. If God strives to soften it with sorrow and sad accidents, it is

like an ox, it grows callous and hard: consideration of particulars.

1. The heart is strangely proud. If men commend us we think that we have reason to be distinguished from others; if they do not, we suppose them to be stupid or envious; and we then are apt to speak well of ourselves, and ourselves only: this topic enlarged on.

2. The heart of man is deeply in love with wickedness, and with nothing else, against not only the laws of God, but against its own reason, interest, and security: for is it imaginable, that a man who knows the laws of God, the rewards of virtue, the horrid effects of sin; that considers the intolerable pains of hell; that knows the joys of heaven to be unspeakable, and yet attainable by a holy life; is it imaginable that this man should, for a transient action, forfeit all this hope, and incur all that calamity? Yea, but the sin is pleasant, and the man is clothed with flesh and blood, and the appetites are material, and importunate, and present, and the discourses of religion are concerning things spiritual, separate, and apt for spirits and souls departed. To take off this, we will suppose the man to consider and to believe, that the pleasure of the sin is vain and transient; that it leaves bitterness behind it; that he remembers and considers, that as soon as the sin is past, he will have an intolerable conscience, and recollects also the miseries of eternity: yet that this man should sin! Nay, suppose the sin to have no pleasure at all, like that of swearing; nay, suppose it painful, like that of envy; what should make the man sin against reason, religion, and interest, without pleasure and for no reward? Here the heart betrays itself to be *desperately wicked:* this topic fully dilated on.

Many other topics might be mentioned, if time permitted; as that we are false ourselves, and dare not trust God; we love to be deceived, and are angry if we are told of it; we love to seem virtuous, but hate to be so; we are impatient, yet

know not why; we are troubled at little things, and are careless of greater, &c. &c. Concluding exhortations, to watch our heart at every turn; to deny it its desires; to suspect it as an enemy; not to trust it in any thing; but to pray with importunity and constancy for the grace of God, to bring good out of these evils.

SERMON IV.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.

JEREMIAH, CHAP. XVII.—VERSE 9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

PART I.

FOLLY and subtilty divide the greatest part of mankind; and there is no other difference but this; that some are crafty enough to deceive, others foolish enough to be cozened and abused: and yet the scales also turn; for they that are the most crafty to cozen others, are the veriest fools, and most of all abused themselves. They rob their neighbor of his money, and lose their own innocency; they disturb his rest, and vex their own conscience; they throw him into prison, and themselves into hell; they make poverty to be their brother's portion, and damnation to be their own. Man entered into the world first alone; but as soon as he met with one companion, he met with three to cozen him; the serpent, and Eve, and himself, all joined,—first to make him a fool, and to deceive him, and then to make him miserable. But he first cozened himself, 'giving himself up to believe a lie;' and being desirous to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, he sinned before he fell; that is, he had within him a false understanding, and a depraved will: and these were the parents of his disobedience, and this was the parent of his infelicity, and a great occasion of ours. And then it was that he entered, for himself and his posterity, into the condition of an ignorant, credulous, easy, wilful,

passionate, and impotent person; apt to be abused, and so loving to have it so, that if nobody else will abuse him, he will be sure to abuse himself; by ignorance and evil principles being open to an enemy, and by wilfulness and sensuality doing to himself the most unpardonable injuries in the whole world. So that the condition of man, in the rudeness and first lines of its visage, seems very miserable, deformed, and accursed.

For a man is helpless and vain; of a condition so exposed to calamity, that a raisin is able to kill him: any trooper out of the Egyptian army, a fly can do it, when it goes on God's errand; the most contemptible accident can destroy him, the smallest chance affright him, every future contingency, when but considered as possible, can amaze him; and he is encompassed with potent and malicious enemies, subtle and implacable: what shall this poor helpless thing do? Trust in God? him he hath offended, and he fears him as an enemy; and, God knows, if we look only on ourselves, and on our own demerits, we have too much reason so to do. Shall he rely on princes? God help poor kings; they rely on their subjects, they fight with their swords, levy force with their money, consult with their counsels, hear with their ears, and are strong only in their union, and many times they use all these things against them; but, however, they can do nothing without them while they live, and yet if ever they can die, they are not to be trusted to. Now kings and princes die so sadly and notoriously, that it was used for a proverb in holy Scripture, 'Ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.' Whom then shall we trust in? In our friend? Poor man! he may help thee in one thing, and need thee in ten: he may pull thee out of the ditch, and his foot may slip and fall into it himself: he gives thee counsel to choose a wife, and himself is to seek how prudently to choose his religion: he counsels thee to abstain from a duel, and yet slays his own soul with drinking: like a person void of all understanding, he is willing enough to preserve thy interest, and is very careless of his own; for he does highly despise to betray or to be false to thee, and in the mean time is not his own friend, and is false to God; and then his friendship may be useful to thee in some circumstances of fortune, but no se-

curity to thy condition. But what then? shall we rely on our patron, like the Roman clients, who waited hourly on their persons, and daily on their baskets, and nightly on their lusts, and married their friendships, and contracted also their hatred and quarrels? this is a confidence will deceive us. For they may lay us by, justly or unjustly; they may grow weary of doing benefits, or their fortunes may change; or they may be charitable in their gifts, and burdensome in their offices; able to feed you, but unable to counsel you; or your need may be longer than their kindnesses, or such in which they can give you no assistance: and, indeed, generally it is so, in all the instances of men. We have a friend that is wise; but I need not his counsel, but his meat: or my patron is bountiful in his largesses; but I am troubled with a sad spirit; and money and presents do me no more ease than perfumes do to a broken arm. We seek life of a physician that dies, and go to him for health who cannot cure his own breath or gout; and so become vain in our imaginations, abused in our hopes, restless in our passions, impatient in our calamity, unsupported in our need, exposed to enemies, wandering and wild, without counsel and without remedy. At last, after the infatuating and deceiving all our confidences without, we have nothing left us but to return home, and dwell within ourselves: for we have a sufficient stock of self-love, that we may be confident of our own affections, we may trust ourselves surely; for what we want in skill we shall make up in diligence, and our industry shall supply the want of other circumstances; and no man understands my own case so well as I do myself, and no man will judge so faithfully as I shall do for myself; for I am most concerned not to abuse myself; and if I do, I shall be the loser, and therefore may best rely on myself. Alas! and God help us! we shall find it to be no such matter: for we neither love ourselves well, nor understand our own case; we are partial in our own questions, deceived in our sentences, careless of our interests, and the most false, perfidious creatures to ourselves in the whole world: even the 'heart of a man,' a man's own heart, 'is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' and who can choose but know it?

And there is no greater argument of the deceitfulness of our

hearts than this, that no man can know it all; it cozens us in the very number of its cozenage. But yet we can reduce it all to two heads. We say concerning a false man, Trust him not, for he will deceive you; and we say concerning a weak and broken staff, Lean not on it, for that will also deceive you. The man deceives because he is false, and the staff because it is weak, and the heart because it is both. So that it is 'deceitful above all things:' that is, failing and disabled to support us in many things, but in other things, where it can, it is false and 'desperately wicked.' The first sort of deceitfulness is its calamity, and the second is its iniquity; and that is the worse calamity of the two.

1. The heart is deceitful in its strength; and when we have the growth of a man, we have the weaknesses of a child: nay, more yet, and it is a sad consideration, the more we are in age, the weaker in our courage. It appears in the heats and forwardnesses of new converts, which are like to the great emissions of lightning, or like huge fires, which flame and burn without measure, even all that they can; till from flames they descend to still fires, from thence to smoke, from smoke to embers, and from thence to ashes; cold and pale, like ghosts, or the fantastic images of death. And the primitive church were zealous in their religion up to the degree of cherubims, and would run as greedily to the sword of the hangman, to die for the cause of God, as we do now to the greatest joy and entertainment of a Christian spirit,—even to the receiving of the holy sacrament. A man would think it reasonable that the first infancy of Christianity should, according to the nature of first beginnings, have been remiss, gentle, and inactive; and that, according as the object or evidence of faith grew, which in every age hath a great degree of argument superadded to its confirmation, so should the habit also and the grace; the longer it lasts, and the more objections it runs through, it still should show a brighter and more certain light to discover the divinity of its principle; and that after the more examples, and new accidents and strangenesses of providence, and daily experience, and the multitude of miracles, still the Christian should grow more certain in his faith, more refreshed in his hope, and warm in his charity; the very nature of these graces increasing and

swelling on the very nourishment of experience, and the multiplication of their own acts. And yet, because the heart of man is false, it suffers the fires of the altar to go out, and the flames lessen by the multitude of fuel. But, indeed, it is because we put on strange fire, and put out the fire on our hearths by letting in a glaring sunbeam, the fire of lust, or the heats of an angry spirit, to quench the fire of God, and suppress the sweet cloud of incense. The heart of man hath not strength enough to think one good thought of itself; it cannot command its own attentions to a prayer of ten lines long, but, before its end, it shall wander after something that is to no purpose; and no wonder, then, that it grows weary of a holy religion, which consists of so many parts as make the business of a whole life. And there is no greater argument in the world of our spiritual weakness, and the falseness of our hearts in the matters of religion, than the backwardness which most men have always, and all men have sometimes, to say their prayers; so weary of their length, so glad when they are done, so witty to excuse and frustrate an opportunity; and yet there is no manner of trouble in the duty, no weariness of bones, no violent labors; nothing but begging a blessing, and receiving it; nothing but doing ourselves the greatest honor of speaking to the greatest Person and greatest King of the world: and that we should be unwilling to do this, so unable to continue in it, so backward to return to it, so without gust and relish in the doing it, can have no visible reason in the nature of the thing, but something within us, a strange sickness in the heart, a spiritual nauseating or loathing of manna, something that hath no name; but we are sure it comes from a weak, a faint, and false heart.

And yet this weak heart is strong in passions, violent in desires, irresistible in its appetites, impatient in its lust, furious in anger: here are strengths enough, one should think. But so have I seen a man in a fever, sick and distempered, unable to walk, less able to speak sense, or to do an act of counsel; and yet, when his fever had boiled up to a delirium, he was strong enough to beat his nursekeeper and his doctor too, and to resist the loving violence of all his friends, who would fain bind him down to reason and his bed: and yet we still say, he is weak, and sick to death. Θέλω γὰρ εἶναι τόνους ἐν σώματι, ἀλλ' ὡς

ὑγιαίνοντι, ὡς ἀθλοῦντι. For these strengths of madness are not health, but furiousness and disease. Οὐκ εἰσὶ τόνοι, ἀλλὰ ἀτονία ἕτερον τρόπον, "it is weakness another way."* And so are the strengths of a man's heart: they are fetters and manacles; strong, but they are the cordage of imprisonment; so strong, that the heart is not able to stir. And yet it cannot but be a huge sadness, that the heart shall pursue a temporal interest with wit and diligence, and an unwearied industry; and shall not have strength enough, in a matter that concerns its eternal interest, to answer one objection, to resist one assault, to defeat one art of the devil; but shall certainly and infallibly fall, whenever it is tempted to a pleasure.

This, if it be examined, will prove to be a deceit, indeed, a pretence, rather than true on a just cause; that is, it is not a natural, but a moral and a vicious weakness; and we may try it in one or two familiar instances. One of the great strengths, shall I call it? or weaknesses of the heart, is,—that it is strong, violent and passionate in its lusts, and weak and deceitful to resist any. Tell the tempted person, that if he act his lust, he dishonors his body, makes himself a servant to folly, and one flesh with a harlot; he 'defiles the temples of God,' and him that defiles a temple, 'will God destroy:' tell him, that the angels, who love to be present in the nastiness and filth of prisons, that they may comfort and assist chaste souls and holy persons there abiding, yet they are impatient to behold or come near the filthiness of a lustful person: tell him, that this sin is so ugly, that the devils, who are spirits, yet they delight to counterfeit the acting of this crime, and descend unto the daughters or sons of men, that they may rather lose their natures, than not to help to set a lust forward: tell them these and ten thousand things more; you move them no more, than if you should read one of Tully's orations to a mule: for the truth is, they have no power to resist it, much less to master it; their heart fails them when they meet their mistress; and they are driven like a fool to the stocks, or a bull to the slaughter-house. And yet their heart deceives them; not because it cannot resist the temptation, but because it will not go about it: for it is certain,

* Arrian.

the heart can, if it list. For let a boy enter into your chamber of pleasure, and discover your folly, either your lust disbands, or your shame hides it; you will not, you dare not, do it before a stranger-boy: and yet, that you dare do it before the eyes of the all-seeing God, is impudence and folly, and a great conviction of the vanity of your pretence, and the falseness of your heart. If thou beest a man given to thy appetite, and thou lovest a pleasant morsel as thy life, do not declaim against the precepts of temperance as impossible: try this once; abstain from that draught, or that dish. I cannot. No? Give this man a great blow on the face, or tempt him with twenty pounds, and he shall fast from morning till night, and then feast himself with your money, and plain wholesome meat. And if chastity and temperance be so easy, that a man may be brought to either of them with so ready and easy instruments; let us not suffer our heart to deceive us by the weakness of its pretences, and the strength of its desires; for we do more for a boy than for God, and for twenty pounds than heaven itself.

But thus it is in every thing else: take a heretic, a rebel, a person that hath an ill cause to manage; what he wants in the strength of his reason, he shall make it up with diligence; and a person that hath right on his side, is cold, indiligent, lazy, and inactive, trusting that the goodness of his cause will do it alone. But, so wrong prevails, while evil persons are zealous in a bad matter, and others are remiss in a good; and the same person shall be very industrious always, when he hath least reason so to be. That is the first particular, the heart is deceitful in the managing of its natural strengths; it is naturally and physically strong, but morally weak and impotent.

2. The heart of man is deceitful in making judgment concerning its own acts. It does not know when it is pleased or displeased; it is peevish and trifling; it would and it would not; and it is in many cases impossible to know whether a man's heart desires such a thing or not. St. Ambrose hath an odd saying, *Facilius inveneris innocentem, quam qui pœnitentiam digne egerit;* "it is easier to find a man that lived innocently, than one that hath truly repented him," with a grief and care great according to the merit of his sins. Now, suppose, a man that hath spent his younger years in vanity and

folly, and is by the grace of God apprehensive of it, and thinks of returning to sober counsels; this man will find his heart so false, so subtle and fugitive, so secret and undiscernible, that it will be very hard to discern whether he repents or no. For if he considers that he hates sin, and therefore repents; alas! he so hates it, that he dares not, if he be wise, tempt himself with an opportunity to act it: for in the midst of that which he calls hatred, he hath so much love left for it, that if the sin comes again and speaks him fair, he is lost again, he kisses the fire, and dies in its embraces. And why else should it be necessary for us to pray, that 'we be not led into temptation,' but because we hate the sin, and yet love it too well; we curse it, and yet follow it; we are angry at ourselves, and yet cannot be without it; we know it undoes us, but we think it pleasant. And when we are to execute the fierce anger of the Lord on our sins, yet we are kind-hearted, and spare the Agag, the reigning sin, the splendid temptation; we have some kindnesses left towards it.

These are but ill signs. How then shall I know, by some infallible token, that I am a true penitent? What and if I weep for my sins? will you not then give me leave to conclude my heart right with God, and at enmity with sin? It may be so. But there are some friends that weep at parting; and, is not thy weeping a sorrow of affection? It is a sad thing to part with our long companion. Or, it may be thou weepest, because thou wouldest have a sign to cozen thyself withal: for some men are more desirous to have a sign, than the thing signified; they would do something to show their repentance, that themselves may believe themselves to be penitents, having no reason from within to believe so. And I have seen some persons weep heartily for the loss of sixpence, or for the breaking of a glass, or at some trifling accident; and they that do so, cannot pretend to have their tears valued at a bigger rate than they will confess their passion to be, when they weep; they are vexed for the dirtying of their linen, or some such trifle, for which the least passion is too big an expense. So that a man cannot tell his own heart by his tears, or the truth of his repentance by those short gusts of sorrow. How then? Shall we suppose a man to pray against his sin? So did St. Austin;

when, in his youth, he was tempted to lust and uncleanness, he prayed against it, and secretly desired that God would not hear him: for here the heart is cunning to deceive itself. For, no man did ever heartily pray against his sin in the midst of a temptation to it, if he did in any sense or degree listen to the temptation: for to pray against a sin, is to have desires contrary to it, and that cannot consist with any love or kindness to it. We pray against it, and yet do it; and then pray again, and do it again: and we desire it, and yet pray against the desires; and that is almost a contradiction. Now, because no man can be supposed to will against his own will, or choose against his own desires; it is plain, that we cannot know whether we mean what we say when we pray against sin, but by the event: if we never act it, never entertain it, always resist it, ever fight against it, and finally do prevail; then, at length, we may judge our own heart to have meant honestly in that one particular.

Nay, our heart is so deceitful in this matter of repentance, that the masters of spiritual life are fain to invent suppletory arts and stratagems to secure the duty; and we are advised to mourn, because we do not mourn; to be sorrowful, because we are not sorrowful. Now, if we be sorrowful in the first stage, how happens it that we know it not? Is our heart so secret to ourselves? But if we be not sorrowful in the first period, how shall we be so, or know it, in the second period? For we may as well doubt concerning the sincerity of the second, or reflex act of sorrow, as of the first and direct action: and, therefore, we may also as well be sorrowful the third time, for want of the just measure or hearty meaning of the second sorrow, as be sorrowful the second time, for want of true sorrow at the first; and so on to infinite. And we shall never be secure in this artifice, if we be not certain of our natural and hearty passion in our direct and first apprehensions.

Thus many persons think themselves in a good estate, and make no question of their salvation, being confident only because they are confident; and they are so, because they are bidden to be so; and yet they are not confident at all, but extremely timorous and fearful. How many persons are there in the world, that say they are sure of their salvation, and yet they dare not die? And, if any man pretends that he is now sure be

shall be saved, and that he cannot fall away from grace; there is no better way to confute him, than by advising him to send for the surgeon, and bleed to death. For what would hinder him? not the sin; for it cannot take him from God's favor: not the change of his condition; for he says, he is sure to go to a better: why does he not then say κέκρικα, like the Roman gallants when they "decreed" to die. The reason is plainly this; they say they are confident, and yet are extremely timorous; they profess to believe that doctrine, and yet dare not trust it; nay, they think they believe, but they do not: so false is a man's heart, so deceived in its own acts, so great a stranger to its own sentence and opinions.

3. The heart is deceitful in its own resolutions and purposes: for many times men make their resolutions only in their understanding, not in their will; they resolve it fitting to be done, not decree that they will do it; and instead of beginning to be reconciled to God by the renewed and hearty purposes of holy living, they are advanced so far only as to be convinced, and apt to be condemned by their own sentence.

But suppose our resolutions advanced farther, and that our will and choices also are determined; see how our hearts deceive us.

1. We resolve against those sins that please us not, or where temptation is not present, and think, by an over-acted zeal against some sins, to give an indulgence for some others. There are some persons who will be drunk; the company, or the discourse, or the pleasure of madness, or an easy nature and a thirsty soul, something is amiss, that cannot be helped: but they will make amends, and the next day pray twice as much. Or, it may be, they must satisfy a beastly lust; but they will not be drunk for all the world; and hope, by their temperance, to commute for their want of chastity. But they attend not the craft of their secret enemy, their heart: for it is not love of the virtue; if it were, they would love virtue in all its instances;* for chastity is as much a virtue as temperance, and God hates lust as much as he hates drunkenness. But this

* Virtutem si unam amiseris (etsi amitti virtus non potest, sed si unam confessus fueris te non habere), nullam te esse habiturum? Cicer. Tusc. Quæst. ii. 13. Davis.

sin is against my health, or, it may be, it is against my lust; it makes me impotent, and yet impatient; full of desire, and empty of strength. Or else I do an act of prayer, lest my conscience become unquiet, while it is not satisfied, or cozened with some intervals of religion: I shall think myself a damned wretch if I do nothing for my soul; but if I do, I shall call the one sin that remains, nothing but my infirmity; and therefore it is my excuse: and my prayer is not my religion, but my peace, and my pretence, and my fallacy.

2. We resolve against our sin, that is, we will not act it in those circumstances as formerly. I will not be drunk in the streets; but I may sleep till I be recovered, and then come forth sober: or, if I be overtaken, it shall be in civil and genteel company. Or it may be not so much; I will leave my intemperance and my lust too, but I will remember it with pleasure; I will revolve the past action in my mind, and entertain my fancy with a morose delectation in it, and, by a fiction of imagination, will represent it present, and so be satisfied with a little effeminacy or fantastic pleasure. Beloved, suffer not your hearts so to cozen you; as if any man can be faithful in much, that is faithless in a little. He certainly is very much in love with sin, and parts with it very unwillingly, that keeps its picture, and wears its favor, and delights in the fancy of it, even with the same desire as a most passionate widow parts with her dearest husband, even when she can no longer enjoy him: but certainly her staring all day on his picture, and weeping over his robe, and wringing her hands over his children, are no great signs that she hated him. And just so do most men hate, and accordingly part with, their sins.

3. We resolve against it when the opportunity is slipped, and lay it aside as long as the temptation please, even till it come again, and no longer. How many men are there in the world, that against every communion renew their vows of holy living! men that for twenty, for thirty years together, have been perpetually resolving against what they daily act; and sure enough they did believe themselves. And yet if a man had daily promised us a courtesy, and failed us but ten times, when it was in his power to have done it,—we should think we

had reason never to believe him more. And can we then reasonably believe the resolutions of our hearts, which they have falsified so many hundred times? We resolve against a religious time, because then it is the custom of men, and the guise of the religion: or we resolve when we are in a great danger; and then we promise any thing, possible or impossible, likely or unlikely, all is one to us; we only care to remove the present pressure; and when that is over, and our fear is gone, and no love remaining, our condition being returned to our first securities, our resolutions also revert to their first indifferences: or else we cannot look a temptation in the face, and we resolve against it, hoping never to be troubled with its arguments and importunity. Epictetus tells us of a gentleman returning from banishment, who, in his journey towards home, called at his house, told a sad story of an imprudent life, the greatest part of which being now spent, he was resolved for the future to live philosophically, and entertain no business, to be candidate for no employment, not to go to the court, not to salute Cæsar with ambitious attendances, but to study, and worship the gods, and die willingly, when nature or necessity called him. It may be, this man believed himself, but Epictetus did not. And he had reason: for ἀπήντησαν αὐτῷ παρὰ Καίσαρος πιττακίδια, "letters from Cæsar met him" at the doors, and invited him to court; and he forgot all his promises, which were warm on his lips; and grew pompous, secular, and ambitious, and gave the gods thanks for his preferment.* Thus many men leave the world, when their fortune hath left them; and they are severe and philosophical, and retired for ever, if for ever it be impossible to return: but let a prosperous sunshine warm and refresh their sadnesses, and make it but possible to break their purposes, and there needs no more temptation; their own false heart is enough; they are like 'Ephraim in the day of battle, starting aside like a broken bow.'

4. The heart is false, deceiving and deceived, in its intentions and designs. A man hears the precepts of God enjoining us to give alms of all we possess; he readily obeys with much cheerfulness and alacrity, and his charity, like a fair-spreading

* Upton, t. i. p. 60.

face, looks beauteously: but there is a canker at the heart; the man blows a trumpet to call the poor together, and hopes the neighborhood will take notice of his bounty. Nay, he gives alms privately, and charges no man to speak of it, and yet hopes by some accident or other to be praised both for his charity and humility. And if, by chance, the fame of his alms come abroad, it is but his duty to 'let his light so shine before men,' that God may be 'glorified,' and some of our neighbors be relieved, and others edified. But then, to distinguish the intention of our heart in this instance, and to seek God's glory in a particular, which will also conduce much to our reputation, and to have no filthy adherence to stick to the heart, no reflexion on ourselves, or no complacency and delight in popular noises, is the nicety of abstraction, and requires an angel to do it. Some men are so kind-hearted, so true to their friend, that they will watch his very dying groans, and receive his last breath, and close his eyes. And if this be done with honest intention, it is well: but there are some that do so, and yet are vultures and harpies; they watch for the carcass, and prey on a legacy. A man with a true story may be malicious to his enemy, and by doing himself right may also do him wrong: and so false is the heart of man, so clancular and contradictory are its actions and intentions, that some men pursue virtue with great earnestness, and yet cannot with patience look on it in another: it is beauty in themselves, and deformity in the other. Is it not plain, that not the virtue, but its reputation, is the thing that is pursued? And yet, if you tell the man so, he thinks he hath reason to complain of your malice or detraction. Who is able to distinguish his fear of God from fear of punishment, when, from fear of punishment, we are brought to fear God? And yet the difference must be distinguishable in new converts and old disciples; and our fear of punishment must so often change its circumstances, that it must be at last a fear to offend out of pure love, and must have no formality left to distinguish it from charity. It is easy to distinguish these things in precepts, and to make the separation in the schools; the head can do it easily, and the tongue can do it: but when the heart comes to separate alms from charity, God's glory from human praise, fear from fear, and sincerity from hypocrisy; it

does so intricate the questions, and confound the ends, and blind and entangle circumstances, that a man hath reason to doubt that his very best actions are sullied with some unhandsome excrescency, something to make them very often to be criminal, but always to be imperfect.

Here, a man would think, were enough to abate our confidence, and the spirit of pride, and to make a man eternally to stand on his guard, and to keep a strict watch on his own heart, as on his greatest enemy from without. *Custodi, libera me de meipso, Deus;* it was St. Austin's prayer; "Lord, keep me; Lord, deliver me from myself." If God will keep a man that he be not *felo de se*, that "he lay no violent hands on himself," it is certain nothing else can do him mischief. Οὔτε Ζεὺς, οὔτε μοῖρα, οὔτε Ἐρινὺς, as Agamemnon said, "Neither Jupiter, nor destinies, nor the furies," but it is a man's self, that does him the mischief. The devil can but tempt, and offer a dagger at the heart; unless our hands thrust it home, the devil can do nothing, but what may turn to our advantage. And in this sense we are to understand the two seeming contradictories in Scripture: 'Pray that ye enter not into temptation,' said our blessed Saviour; and, 'Count it all joy when you enter into divers temptations,' said one of Christ's disciples. The case is easy. When God suffers us to be tempted, he means it but as a trial of our faith, as the exercise of our virtues, as the opportunity of reward; and in such cases we have reason to count it all joy; since the 'trial of our faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience causeth hope, and hope maketh not ashamed:' but yet, for all this, 'pray against temptations:' for when we get them into our hands, we use them as blind men do their clubs, neither distinguish person nor part; they strike the face of their friends as soon as the back of the enemy; our hearts betray us to the enemy, we fall in love with our mischief, we contrive how to let the lust in, and leave a port open on purpose, and use arts to forget our duty, and give advantages to the devil. He that uses a temptation thus, hath reason to pray against it: and yet our hearts do all this and a thousand times more; so that we may engrave on our hearts the epitaph, which was digged into Thyestes' grave-stone;

Nolite, hospites, ad me adire; illico isthic;
Ne contagio mea bonis umbrave obsit:
Meo tanta vis sceleris in corpore hæret.*

There is so much falseness and iniquity in man's heart, that it defiles all the members: it makes the eyes lustful, and the tongue slanderous; it fills the head with mischief, and the feet with blood, and the hands with injury, and the present condition of man with folly, and makes his future state apt to inherit eternal misery. But this is but the beginning of those throes and damnable impieties which proceed out of the heart of man, and defile the whole constitution. I have yet told but the weaknesses of the heart; I shall the next time tell you the iniquities, those inherent devils which pollute and defile it to the ground, and make it 'desperately wicked,' that is, wicked beyond all expression.

SERMON IV.

PART II.

Ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας συναίσθησις τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀσθενείας, καὶ ἀδυναμίας περὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα, "It is the beginning of wisdom to know a man's own weaknesses and failings, in things of greatest necessity:"† and we have here so many objects to furnish out this knowlege, that we find it with the longest and latest, before it be obtained. A man does not begin to know himself till he be old, and then he is well stricken in death. A man's heart at first being like a plain table; unspotted, indeed, but then there is nothing legible in it: as soon as ever we ripen towards the imperfect uses of our reason, we write on this table such crooked characters, such imperfect configurations, so many

* Cicero de Orat. iii. c. 41. Harles, p. 567. † Epict. Arrian.

fooleries, and stain it with so many blots and vicious inspersions, that there is nothing worth the reading in our hearts for a great while: and when education and ripeness, reason and experience, Christian philosophy and the grace of God, have made fair impressions, and written the law in our hearts with the finger of God's Holy Spirit, we blot out this hand-writing of God's ordinances, or mingle it with false principles and interlinings of our own; we disorder the method of God, or deface the truth of God: either we make the rule uneven, we bribe or abuse our guide, that we may wander with an excuse; or if nothing else will do it, we turn head and profess to go against the laws of God. Our hearts are blind, or our hearts are hardened; for these are two great arguments of the wickedness of our hearts: they do not see, or they will not see, the ways of God; or if they do, they make use of their seeing, that they may avoid them.

I. Our hearts are blind, wilfully blind. I need not instance in the ignorance and involuntary nescience of men; though if we speak of the necessary parts of religion, no man is ignorant of them without his own fault: such ignorance is always a direct sin, or the direct punishment of a sin: a sin is either in its bosom, or in its retinue. But the ignorance that I now intend, is a voluntary, chosen, delightful ignorance, taken in on design, even for no other end, but that we may perish quietly and infallibly. God hath opened all the windows of heaven, and sent the Sun of Righteousness with glorious apparition, and hath discovered the abysses of his own wisdom, made the second person in the Trinity to be the doctor and preacher of his sentences and secrets, and the third person to be his amanuensis or scribe, and our hearts to be the book in which the doctrine is written, and miracles and prophecies to be its arguments, and all the world to be the verification of it: and those leaves contain within their folds all that excellent morality, which right reason picked up after the shipwreck of nature, and all those wise sayings which singly made so many men famous for preaching some one of them; all them Christ gathered, and added some more out of the immediate book of revelation. So that now the wisdom of God hath made every man's heart to be the true veronica, in which he hath imprinted his own linea-

ments so perfectly, that we may dress ourselves like God, and have the air and features of Christ our elder brother; that we may be pure as God is, perfect as our Father, meek and humble as the Son, and may have the Holy Ghost within us, in gifts and graces, in wisdom and holiness. This hath God done for us; and see what we do for him. We stand in our own light, and quench God's: we love darkness more than light, and entertain ourselves accordingly. For how many of us are there, that understand nothing of the ways of God; that know no more of the laws of Jesus Christ than is remaining on them since they learned the children's catechism? But, amongst a thousand, how many can explicate and unfold for his own practice the ten commandments, and how many sorts of sins are there forbidden? which therefore pass into action, and never pass under the scrutinies of repentance, because they know not that they are sins. Are there not very many, who know not the particular duties of 'meekness,' and never consider concerning 'long-suffering?' and if you talk to them of growth in grace, or the Spirit of obsignation, or the melancholic lectures of the cross, and imitation of, and conformity to, Christ's sufferings, or adherences to God, or rejoicing in him, or not quenching the Spirit; you are too deep-learned for them. And yet these are duties set down plainly for our practice, necessary to be acted in order to our salvation. We brag of light, and reformation, and fulness of the Spirit: in the mean time we understand not many parts of our duty. We inquire into something that may make us talk, or be talked of, or that we may trouble a church, or disturb the peace of minds: but in things that concern holy living, and that wisdom of God whereby we are wise unto salvation, never was any age of Christendom more ignorant than we. For, if we did not wink hard, we must needs see, that obedience to supreme powers, denying of ourselves, humility, peacefulness, and charity, are written in such capital text letters, that it is impossible to be ignorant of them. And if the heart of man had not rare arts to abuse the understanding, it were not to be imagined that any man should bring the thirteenth chapter to the Romans to prove the lawfulness of taking up arms against our rulers: but so we may abuse ourselves at noon, and go to bed, if we please

to call it midnight. And there have been a sort of witty men, that maintained that snow was hot. I wonder not at the problem: but that a man should believe his paradox, and should let eternity go away with the fallacy, and rather lose heaven than leave his foolish argument; is a sign that wilfulness and the deceiving heart is the sophister, and the great ingredient into our deception.

But, that I may be more particular; the heart of man uses devices that it may be ignorant.

1. We are impatient of honest and severe reproof; and order the circumstances of our persons and addresses, that we shall never come to the true knowlege of our condition. Who will endure to hear his curate tell him, that he is covetous, or that he is proud? *Λέγει, ὦ δεινῆς ὕβρεως.* It is calumny and reviling, if he speak it to his head, and relates to his person; and yet if he speak only in general, every man neglects what is not recommended to his particular. But yet, if our physician tell us, You look well, sir, but a fever lurks in your spirits; *Ἀσίτησον, σήμερον ὕδωρ πίε,* "Drink julaps, and abstain from flesh;"—no man thinks it a shame or calumny to be told so: but when we are told that our liver is inflamed with lust or anger, that our heart is vexed with envy, that our eyes roll with wantonness; and though we think all is well, yet we are sick, sick unto death, and near to a sad and fatal sentence; we shall think that man that tells us so, is impudent or uncharitable; and yet he hath done him no more injury than a deformed man receives daily from his looking-glass, which if he shall dash against the wall, because it shows him his face just as it is, his face is not so ugly as his manners. And yet our heart is so impatient of seeing its own stains, that, like the elephant, it tramples in the pure streams, and first troubles them, then stoops and drinks, when he can least see his huge deformity.

2. In order to this, we heap up teachers of our own, and they guide us, not whither, but which way, they please: for we are curious to go our own way, and careless of our hospital or inn at night. A fair way, and a merry company, and a pleasant easy guide, will entice us into the enemy's quarters; and such guides we cannot want: *Improbitati occasio nunquam defuit;* "If we have a mind to be wicked, we shall want no

prompters;" and false teachers, at first creeping in unawares, have now so filled the pavement of the church, that you can scarce set your foot on the ground but you tread on a snake. Cicero (l. 7. ad Atticum) undertakes to bargain with them that kept the Sibyls' books, that for a sum of money they should expound to him what he please; and, to be sure, *ut quidvis potius quam regem proferrent;* "they shall declare against the government of kings, and say, that the gods will endure any thing rather than monarchy in their beloved republic." And the same mischief God complains of to be among the Jews: 'The prophets prophesy lies, and my people love to have it so: and what will the end of these things be?'—even the same that Cicero complained of, *ad opinionem imperatorum fictas esse religiones;** men shall have what religion they please, and God shall be entitled to all the quarrels of covetous and ambitious persons; *καὶ Πυθίαν φιλιππίζειν*, as Demosthenes wittily complained of the oracle; an answer shall be drawn of Scripture to countenance the design, and God made the rebel against his own ordinances. And then we are zealous for the Lord God of hosts, and will live and die in that quarrel. But is it not a strange cozenage, that our hearts shall be the main wheel in the engine, and shall set all the rest on working? The heart shall first put his own candle out, then put out the eye of reason, then remove the land-mark, and dig down the causeways, and then either hire a blind guide, or make him so: and all these arts to get ignorance, that they may secure impiety. At first, man lost his innocence only in hope to get a little knowlege: and ever since then, lest knowlege should discover his error, and make him return to innocence, we are content to part with that now, and to know nothing that may discover or discountenance our sins, or discompose our secular designs. And, as God made great revelations, and furnished out a wise religion, and sent his Spirit to give the gift of faith to his church, that, on the foundation of faith, he might build a holy life; now our hearts love to retire into blindness, and sneak under covert of false principles, and run to a cheap religion, and an inactive discipline, and make a faith of our own, that we may build on it ease, and ambition,

* De Divinat. i. 2.

and a tall fortune, and the pleasures of revenge, and do what we have a mind to; scarce once in seven years denying a strong and an unruly appetite on the interest of a just conscience and holy religion. This is such a desperate method of impiety, so certain arts and apt instruments for the devil, that it does his work intirely, and produces an infallible damnation.

3. But the heart of man hath yet another stratagem to secure its iniquity by the means of ignorance; and that is, incogitancy or inconsideration. For there is wrought on the spirits of many men great impressions by education, by a modest and temperate nature, by human laws, and the customs and severities of sober persons, and the fears of religion, and the awfulness of a reverend man, and the several arguments and endearments of virtue: and it is not in the nature of some men to do an act in despite of reason, and religion, and arguments, and reverence, and modesty, and fear; but men are forced from their sin by the violence of the grace of God, when they hear it speak. But so a Roman gentleman kept off a whole band of soldiers, who were sent to murder him, and his eloquence was stronger than their anger and design: but, suddenly, a rude trooper rushed on him, who neither had nor would hear him speak; and he thrust his spear into that throat, whose music had charmed all his fellows into peace and gentleness. So do we. The grace of God is armor and defence enough against the most violent incursion of the spirits and the works of darkness; but then we must hear its excellent charms, and consider its reasons, and remember its precepts, and dwell with its discourses. But this the heart of man loves not. If I be tempted to uncleanness, or to an act of oppression, instantly the grace of God represents to me, that the pleasure of the sin is transient and vain, unsatisfying and empty; that I shall die, and then I shall wish too late that I had never done it. It tells me, that I displease God who made me, who feeds me, who blesses me, who fain would save me: it represents to me all the joys of heaven, and the horrors and amazements of a sad eternity; and, if I will stay and hear them, ten thousand excellent things besides, fit to be twisted about my understanding for ever. But here the heart of man shuffles all these discourses into disorder, and will not be put to the trouble of answering the objections;

but, by a mere wildness of purpose, and rudeness of resolution, ventures *super totam materiam*, at all, and does the thing, not because it thinks it fit to do so, but because it will not consider whether it be or no; it is enough, that it pleases a pleasant appetite. And if such incogitancy comes to be habitual, as it is in very many men,—first by resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit, then by quenching him,—we shall find the consequence to be, first an indifferency,—then a dulness,—then a lethargy,—then a direct hating the ways of God; and it commonly ends in a wretchlessness of spirit, to be manifested on our death-bed; when the man shall pass hence, not like the shadow, but like the dog, that departeth without sense, or interest, or apprehension, or real concernment, in the considerations of eternity: and it is but just, when we will not hear our King speak and plead, not to save himself, but us, to speak for our peace, and innocency, and salvation, to prevent our ruin, and our intolerable calamity. Certainly, we are much in love with the wages of death, when we cannot endure to hear God call us back, and 'stop our ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely.'

Nay, farther yet, we suffer the arguments of religion to have so little impression on our spirits, that they operate but like the discourses of childhood, or the problems of uncertain philosophy. A man talks of religion but as of a dream, and from thence he awakens into the businesses of the world, and acts them deliberately, with perfect action and full resolution, and contrives, and considers, and lives in them: but when he falls asleep again, or is taken from the scene of his own employment and choice, then he dreams again, and religion makes such impressions as is the conversation of a dreamer, and he acts accordingly. Theocritus tells of a fisherman, that dreamed he had taken χρύσεον ἰχθὺν, "a fish of gold;"* on which being overjoyed, he made a vow that he would never fish more: but when he waked, he soon declared his vow to be null, because he found his golden fish was escaped away through the holes of his eyes, when he first opened them. Just so we do in the purposes of religion: sometimes, in a good mood, we seem to

* Idyl. xxi. 52.

see heaven opened, and all the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem paved with gold and precious stones, and we are ravished with spiritual apprehensions, and resolve never to return to the low affections of the world, and the impure adherences of sin: but when this flash of lightning is gone, and we converse again with the inclinations and habitual desires of our false hearts, those other desires and fine considerations disband, and the resolutions, taken in that pious fit, melt into indifference and old customs. He was prettily and fantastically troubled, who, having used to put his trust in dreams, one night dreamed that all dreams were vain: for he considered, if so, then this was vain, and the dreams might be true for all this: but if they might be true, then this dream might be so on equal reason: and then dreams were vain, because this dream, which told him so, was true; and so round again. In the same circle runs the heart of man: all his cogitations are vain, and yet he makes especial use of this, that that thought which thinks so, that is vain; and if that be vain, then his other thoughts, which are vainly declared so, may be real, and relied on. And so do we: those religious thoughts which are sent into us to condemn and disrepute the thoughts of sin and vanity, are esteemed the only dreams: and so all those instruments which the grace of God hath invented for the destruction of impiety, are rendered ineffectual, either by our direct opposing them, or (which happens most commonly) by our want of considering them.

The effect of all is this, that we are ignorant of the things of God. We make religion to be the work of a few hours in the whole year; we are without fancy or affection to the severities of holy living; we reduce religion to the believing of a few articles, and doing nothing that is considerable; we pray seldom, and then but very coldly and indifferently; we communicate not so often as the sun salutes both the tropics; we profess Christ, but dare not die for him; we are factious for a religion, and will not live according to its precepts; we call ourselves Christians, and love to be ignorant of many of the laws of Christ, lest our knowlege should force us into shame, or into the troubles of a holy life. All the mischiefs that you can suppose to happen to a furious inconsiderate person, running after the wildfires of the night, over rivers, and rocks, and preci-

pices, without sun or star, or angel or man, to guide him; all that, and ten thousand times worse, may you suppose to be the certain lot of him who gives himself up to the conduct of a passionate, blind heart; whom no fire can warm, and no sun can enlighten; who hates light, and loves to dwell in the region of darkness. That is the first general mischief of the heart; it is possessed with blindness, wilful and voluntary.

II. But the heart is hard too. Not only folly, but mischief also is bound up in the heart of man. If God strives to soften it with sorrow and sad accidents, it is like an ox, it grows callous and hard. Such a heart was Pharaoh's. When God makes the clouds to gather round about us, we wrap our heads in the clouds, and, like the malcontents in Galba's time, *tristitiam simulamus, contumaciæ propiores*, "we seem sad and troubled, but it is doggedness and murmur:" or else, if our fears be pregnant, and the heart yielding, it sinks low into pusillanimity and superstition; and our hearts are so childish, so timorous, or so impatient in a sadness, that God is weary of striking us, and we are glad of it. And yet, when the sun shines on us, our hearts are hardened with that too; and God seems to be at a loss, as if he knew not what to do to us. War undoes us, and makes us violent; peace undoes us, and makes us wanton; prosperity makes us proud; adversity renders us impatient; plenty dissolves us and makes us tyrants; want makes us greedy, liars, and rapacious.

πῶς οὖν τις ἂν σώσειε τοιαύτην πόλιν,
ἥ μήτε χλαῖνα, μήτε σισύρα ξυμφέρει;*

"No fortune can save that city to whom neither peace nor war can do advantage." And what is there left for God to mollify our hearts, whose temper is like both to wax and dirt; whom fire hardens, and cold hardens; and contradictory accidents produce no change, save that the heart grows worse and more obdurate for every change of Providence? But here also I must descend to particulars.

1. The heart of man is strangely proud. If men commend

* Aristoph. Ran. 1459. Brunck.

us, we think we have reason to distinguish ourselves from others, since the voice of discerning men hath already made the separation. If men do not commend us, we think they are stupid, and understand us not; or envious, and hold their tongues in spite. If we are praised by many, then *Vox populi, vox Dei*, "Fame is the voice of God:" if we be praised but by few, then *Satis unus, satis nullus;* we cry, "These are wise, and one wise man is worth a whole herd of the people:" but if we be praised by none at all, we resolve to be even with all the world, and speak well of nobody, and think well only of ourselves. And then we have such beggarly arts, such tricks, to cheat for praise. We inquire after our faults and failings, only to be told we have none, but did excellently; and then we are pleased: we rail on our actions, only to be chidden for so doing; and then he is our friend who chides us into a good opinion of ourselves, which however all the world cannot make us part with. Nay, humility itself makes us proud: so false, so base, is the heart of man. For humility is so noble a virtue, that even pride itself puts on its upper garment: and we do like those who cannot endure to look on an ugly or a deformed person, and yet will give a great price for a picture extremely like him. Humility is despised in substance, but courted and admired in effigy: and Æsop's picture was sold for two talents, when himself was made a slave at the price of two philippics. And because humility makes a man to be honored, therefore we imitate all its garbs and postures, its civilities and silence, its modesties and condescensions. And, to prove that we are extremely proud, in the midst of all this pageantry, we should be extremely angry at any man that should say we are proud; and that is a sure sign we are so. And in the midst of all our arts to seem humble, we use devices to bring ourselves into talk; we thrust ourselves into company, we listen at doors, and, like the greatbeards in Rome that pretended philosophy and strict life, *ὀβελίσκον καταπώντες περιπατοῦμεν*, "we walk by the obelisk,"* and meditate in piazzas, that they that meet us may talk of us, and they that follow may cry out, Ὦ *μεγάλου φιλοσόφου*! Behold! there goes

* Arrian, Upton, t. i. p. 60.

an excellent man! He is very prudent, or very learned, or a charitable person, or a good housekeeper, or at least very humble.

2. The heart of man is deeply in love with wickedness, and with nothing else; against not only the laws of God, but against his own reason, its own interest, and its own securities. For is it imaginable, that a man who knows the laws of God, the rewards of virtue, the cursed and horrid effects of sin; that knows, and considers, and deeply sighs at the thought of the intolerable pains of hell; that knows the joys of heaven to be unspeakable, and that concerning them there is no temptation, but that they are too big for man to hope for, and yet he certainly believes that a holy life shall infallibly attain thither: is it, I say, imaginable that this man should, for a transient action, forfeit all this hope, and certainly and knowingly incur all that calamity? Yea, but the sin is pleasant, and the man is clothed with flesh and blood, and their appetites are material, and importunate, and present; and the discourses of religion are concerning things spiritual, separate and apt for spirits, angels, and souls departed. To take off this also, we will suppose the man to consider and really to believe that the pleasure of the sin is sudden, vain, empty, and transient; that it leaves bitterness on the tongue, before it is descended into the bowels; that there it is poison, and 'makes the belly to swell, and the thigh to rot;' that he remembers and actually considers, that as soon as the moment of sin is past, he shall have an intolerable conscience, and does, at the instant, compare moments with eternity, and with horror remembers that the very next minute he is as miserable a man as is in the world; yet that this man should sin. Nay, suppose the sin to have no pleasure at all, such as is the sin of swearing; nay, suppose it to have pain in it, such as is the sin of envy, which never can have pleasure in its actions, but much torment and consumption of the very heart: what should make this man sin so for nothing, so against himself, so against all reason and religion, and interest, without pleasure, for no reward? Here the heart betrays itself to be 'desperately wicked.' What man can give a reasonable account of such a man, who, to prosecute his revenge, will do himself an injury, that he may do a less to him that troubles

him? Such a man hath given me ill language; Οὔτε τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀλγεῖ, οὔτε τὸν ὄφθαλμον, οὔτε τὸν ἴσχιον, οὔτε τὸν ἀγρὸν ἀπολλύει, "My head aches not for his language, nor hath he broken my thigh, nor carried away my land:" but yet this man must be requited.—Well, suppose that; but then let it be proportionably; you are not undone: let him not be so.—Oh, yes; for else my revenge triumphs not.—Well, if you do, yet remember he will defend himself, or the law will right him; at least, do not do wrong to yourself by doing him wrong: this were but prudence and self-interest. And yet we see that the heart of some men hath betrayed them to such furiousness of appetite, as to make them willing to die that their enemy may be buried in the same ruins. Jovius Pontanus tells of an Italian slave, I think, who being enraged against his lord, watched his absence from home, and the employment and inadvertency of his fellow-servants: he locked the doors, and secured himself for awhile, and ravished his lady; then took her three sons up to the battlements of the house, and, at the return of his lord, threw one down to him on the pavement, and then a second, to rend the heart of their sad father, seeing them weltering in their blood and brains. The lord begged for his third, and now his only son, promising pardon and liberty if he would spare his life. The slave seemed to bend a little, and, on condition his lord would cut off his own nose, he would spare his son. The sad father did so, being willing to suffer any thing rather than the loss of that child. But as soon as he saw his lord all bloody with his wound, he threw the third son and himself down together on the pavement. The story is sad enough, and needs no lustre and advantages of sorrow to represent it: but if a man sets himself down, and considers sadly, he cannot easily tell on what sufficient inducement, or what principle, the slave should so certainly, so horridly, so presently, and then so eternally ruin himself. What could he propound to himself as a recompense to his own so immediate tragedy? There is not in the pleasure of the revenge, nor in the nature of the thing, any thing to tempt him; we must confess our ignorance, and say, that 'the heart of man is desperately wicked;' and that is the truth in general, but we cannot fathom it by particular comprehension.

For when the heart of man is bound up by the grace of God, and tied in golden bands, and watched by angels, tended by those nursekeepers of the soul, it is not easy for a man to wander; and the evil of his heart is but like the ferity and wildness of lions' whelps: but when once we have broken the edge, and got into the strengths of youth, and the licentiousness of an ungoverned age, it is wonderful to observe what a great inundation of mischief, in a very short time, will overflow all the banks of reason and religion. Vice first is pleasing,—then it grows easy,—then delightful,—then frequent,—then habitual,—then confirmed;—then the man is impenitent,—then he is obstinate,—then he resolves never to repent,—and then he is damned. And by that time he is come half-way in this progress, he confutes the philosophy of the old moralists: for they, not knowing the vileness of man's heart, not considering its desperate, amazing impiety, knew no other degree of wickedness but this, that men preferred sense before reason, and their understandings were abused in the choice of a temporal before an intellectual and eternal good: but they always concluded, that the will of man must of necessity follow the last dictate of the understanding, declaring an object to be good, in one sense or other. Happy men they were that were so innocent, that knew no pure and perfect malice, and lived in an age in which it was not easy to confute them. But, besides that now the wells of a deeper iniquity are discovered, we see, by too sad experience, that there are some sins proceeding from the heart of a man, which have nothing but simple and unmingled malice: actions of mere spite, doing evil because it is evil, sinning without sensual pleasures, sinning with sensual pain, with hazard of our lives, with actual torment, and sudden deaths, and certain and present damnation; sins against the Holy Ghost, open hostilities, and professed enmities, against God and all virtue. I can go no farther, because there is not in the world, or in the nature of things, a greater evil. And that is the nature and folly of the devil; he tempts men to ruin, and hates God, and only hurts himself and those he tempts, and does himself no pleasure, and some say he increases his own accidental torment.

Although I can say nothing greater, yet I had many more

things to say, if the time would have permitted me to represent the falseness and baseness of the heart. 1. We are false ourselves, and dare not trust God. 2. We love to be deceived, and are angry if we be told so. 3. We love to seem virtuous, and yet hate to be so. 4. We are melancholic and impatient, and we know not why. 5. We are troubled at little things, and are careless of greater. 6. We are overjoyed at a petty accident, and despise great and eternal pleasures. 7. We believe things, not for their reasons and proper arguments, but as they serve our turns, be they true or false. 8. We long extremely for things that are forbidden us; and what we despise when it is permitted us, we snatch at greedily, when it is taken from us. 9. We love ourselves more than we love God; and yet we eat poisons daily, and feed on toads and vipers, and nourish our deadly enemies in our bosom, and will not be brought to quit them; but brag of our shame, and are ashamed of nothing but virtue, which is most honorable. 10. We fear to die, and yet use all means we can to make death terrible and dangerous. 11. We are busy in the faults of others, and negligent of our own. 12. We live the life of spies, striving to know others, and to be unknown ourselves. 13. We worship and flatter some men and some things, because we fear them, not because we love them. 14. We are ambitious of greatness, and covetous of wealth, and all that we get by it is, that we are more beautifully tempted; and a troop of clients run to us as to a pool, which first they trouble, and then draw dry. 15. We make ourselves unsafe by committing wickedness, and then we add more wickedness, to make us safe and beyond punishment. 16. We are more servile for one courtesy that we hope for, than for twenty that we have received. 17. We entertain slanderers, and, without choice, spread their calumnies; and we hug flatterers, and know they abuse us. And if I should gather the abuses, and impieties, and deceptions of the heart, as Chrysippus did the oracular lies of Apollo into a table, I fear they would seem remediless, and beyond the cure of watchfulness and religion. Indeed, they are great and many; but the grace of God is greater; and 'if iniquity abounds,' then 'doth grace superabound:' and that is our comfort and our medicine, which we must thus use:—

1. Let us watch our heart at every turn.

2. Deny it all its desires, that do not directly, or by consequence, end in godliness: at no hand be indulgent to its fondnesses and peevish appetites.

3. Let us suspect it as an enemy.

4. Trust not to it in any thing.

5. But beg the grace of God with perpetual and importunate prayer, that he would be pleased to bring good out of these evils; and that he would throw the salutary wood of the cross, the merits of Christ's death and passion, into these salt waters, and make them healthful and pleasant.

And in order to the managing these advices, and acting the purposes of this prayer, let us strictly follow a rule, and choose a prudent and faithful guide, who may attend our motions, and watch our counsels, and direct our steps, and 'prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight,' apt, and imitable. For without great watchfulness, and earnest devotion, and a prudent guide, we shall find that true in a spiritual sense, which Plutarch affirmed of a man's body in the natural: that of dead bulls arise bees; from the carcasses of horses, hornets are produced; but the body of man brings forth serpents. Our hearts, wallowing in their own natural and acquired corruptions, will produce nothing but issues of hell, and images of the old serpent the devil, for whom is provided the everlasting burning.

SUMMARY OF SERMON V.

1 PETER, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 17, 18.

PART I.

So long as men lived by sense and discourses of natural reason; so long as they were abated with human infirmities, and not at all heightened by the Spirit and divine revelations, they took their accounts of good and bad by their being prosperous or unfortunate: that only was accounted honest which was profitable; he only was wise that was rich; and those men were beloved of God, who received from him all that might satisfy their lust, ambition, or revenge.

But because God sent wise men into the world, and they were treated rudely by the world, and exercised with evil accidents; and this seemed so great a discouragement to virtue, that even these wise men were more troubled to reconcile virtue and misery, than to reconcile their affections to the suffering; God was pleased to enlighten their reason with a little beam of faith; or else he heightened their reason by wiser principles than those of vulgar understanding, and taught them, in the clear glass of faith, or the dim perspective of philosophy, to look beyond the cloud, &c. And according as the world grew more enlightened by faith, so it grew more dark with mourning and sorrows: this topic enlarged on.

Adam was first placed in a garden of health and pleasure; from which when he fell, he was only tied to enter into the covenant of natural sorrows, which he and his posterity, till the flood, ran through: this state described: but such easiness

and quiet was turned by the world into sin; till God destroyed mankind, that he might begin the government of the world on a new system.

Then God made new laws; and gave to princes the power of the sword; and men's lives were shortened; and slavery was introduced, &c. This state farther described, with the public evils which were then added to the personal miseries of mankind.

When Christ's line was drawn forth, and Abraham's family was chosen, to belong to God by a special right, God found out a new way to try that patriarch, even with a sound affliction; the offering of his son: this a type of Christ, but a type of sufferings. State of the chosen nation considered; their sufferings and afflictions increasing as the time of Christ's manifestation approached. Then Christ came, at which period the changed method of God's providence was perfected; for Christ was to do his great work by sufferings, and by sufferings to enter into glory. God made the same covenant with us that he did with his holy Son; and Christ obtained no better conditions for us than for himself: *The servant must not be above his master*, &c. this topic dilated on.

The state of the gospel then is one of sufferings, not of temporal prosperities. This was foretold by the prophets: instances quoted. And as it was predicted, so it came to pass. Christ was the captain of our sufferings; and he began. His entrance into the world with all the circumstances of poverty, his suffering life, and his ignominious death, detailed. His passion may be said also to continue even after his resurrection, since he suffers in all his members, is crucified again, and put to open shame.

All that Christ came for, was, or was mingled with, suffering; God being more careful to establish in him the covenant of sufferings than to refresh his sorrows. The peculiar sufferings of Jesus described: but that which concerns this question most,

is, that he established for us a covenant of sufferings: his doctrines are such, as suppose a state of affliction; his very promises were sufferings; his beatitudes were sufferings; his rewards and arguments to invite men to follow him, were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter.

If we sum up the commandments of Christ, we shall find humility, mortification, self-denial, renunciation of the world, mourning, taking up the cross, patience, poverty, and a dying for him, standing in the chief rank, and in the direct order to heaven: this subject dilated on.

Since this was done in the green tree, what might we expect should be done in the dry? Consideration of the manner in which God has treated his saints and followers in the descending ages of the gospel.

To begin with the Apostles, who were to persuade the world to become Christian; we shall never find that they used any arguments of temporal prosperity: and of all the Apostles, not one, except John, died a natural death. Their various sufferings commented on: those of St. Paul described.

And now began to work the greatest glory of divine Providence: here was the case of Christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned, and full of wise men: the gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and in demonstration of the spirit: this state farther described, and the victory which Christianity gained over the world.

Persecutions and martyrdoms in the early ages of the church described.

When persecution ceased, the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of Christ's design, was pleased to inspire the church with the spirit of austerity and mortification: this topic dilated on. And there is no state in the church so serene, no days so prosperous, in which God does not give to his servants the powers and op-

portunities of suffering for him: not only they that die for Christ, but they that live according to his laws, shall find many ways to suffer for him, in killing and crucifying the old man with his lusts, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

Let no Christian make any judgment concerning his condition or his cause, by the external event of things: for although in the law of Moses God made with his people a covenant of temporal prosperity, &c. yet in Christ Jesus he made a covenant of sufferings. Most of the graces of Christianity are suffering graces, and God has predestinated us to sufferings, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

God was fain to multiply miracles to make Christ capable of being *a man of sorrows;* and shall we think that he will work miracles to render us delicate? He has promised us a glorious portion hereafter; and shall we choose our portion of *good things in this life?* this subject enlarged on.

Christ considers nothing but souls; he values not their bodies or estates, supplying our want by his providence: and we are secured that our bodies may be killed, but cannot perish, so long as we preserve our duty and our conscience. Concluding reflections.

PART II.

It follows now that we inquire concerning the reasons of divine Providence in this administration of affairs, so far as he hath been pleased to draw aside the curtain. In this valley of tears, it is no wonder if they rejoice who shall hereafter weep eternally, and that *they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

For innocence and joy were appointed to dwell together for ever. And joy went not first; but when innocence went away, sorrow and sickness dispossessed joy of its habitation; and now this world must always be a scene of sorrows, and no joy can grow here but that which is imaginary and fantastic: this en-

larged on: but the same instant that sets us free from sin and the failings of mortality, wipes all tears from our eyes: this however is not in this world. In the mean time,

God afflicts the godly that he may manifest many of his attributes, and his servants exercise many of their virtues. For without the suffering of saints, God would lose the glories of bringing good out of evil; of being with us in tribulation; of sustaining our infirmities; of triumphing over the malice of his enemies. Without these sufferings, where would be the exaltation of the cross? where the trial of our faith? or the exercise of long-suffering? or the opportunities to give God the greatest love?—how should that, which the world calls folly, prove the greatest wisdom?—how should God be glorified by events contrary to expectation?

By the suffering of the saints, the Christian religion is proved to be most excellent and desirable. That man's nature is passible, is its best advantage; for by it we are all redeemed; that is, by the passiveness and sufferings of our Lord and Brother. *Do this and live*, was the covenant of the law: but in the gospel it is, *suffer this and live*. By the sufferings of saints, God chastises their follies, and suffers them not to grow into vices; we must not therefore call that a misery which he intends to make an instrument of saving them. By this economy God gives a great argument to prove the resurrection; since sorrow cannot be the reward of virtue, &c. The sufferings of saints make the sum of Christian philosophy: they are sent to wean us from the vanities of the world, &c. Christ nourishes his church by sufferings: he gives a single blessing to other graces, but a double one to the persecuted, who are innocent and afflicted like him: without this, patience would signify nothing. Moreover, great shall be the reward of that virtue which suffers persecution for Christ's sake: this topic fully dilated on.

But besides all this, there is another account to be made concerning the prosperity of the wicked; *for if judgment first*

begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? that is the question of the Apostle, and is the great instrument of comfort to persons ill-treated in the actions of the world. Although the servants of God have suffered calamities from evil men, yet still it is preserved as one of the fundamental truths of Christianity, that all the fair fortunes of the wicked cannot make them happy, nor can persecutions make good men miserable, nor yet are their sadnesses arguments of God's displeasure against them. For when a godly man is afflicted and dies, it is his business; and if the wicked prevail, that is, persecute the godly, it is only what was to be expected from them: but we must not judge of the things of God by the measures of men: this illustrated.

Sin is not virtue because it is prosperous: a little crime is sure to smart; but when the sinner is rich and prosperous and powerful, he gets impunity; but that is not innocence: rather *he treasures up wrath against the day of wrath*, and, by a continued course of sin, he is prepared for an intolerable ruin. The Spirit of God bids us look on the end of these men, not the way they walk, or the instrument of that pompous death. Various examples given of virtue and virtuous enterprises unsuccessful in this life. There is indeed no age or state in the world, that hath not ministered an example of an afflicted truth, and of a prevailing sin.

But what, after all, is the prosperity of the wicked? To dwell in fine houses, command armies, live luxuriously, &c. Yet consider, would any man amongst us kill his lawful king, to be heir of all these things? Would any man have God angry with him for them? A wise and good man certainly would not: it cannot therefore be any great happiness to thrive on the stock of sin: this topic enlarged on.

Instances of God's vengeance overtaking sinners or their posterity even in this life. But if we should look under the skirt of the prosperous and prevailing tyrant, we should find,

even in the days of his joy, such allays and abatements of his pleasure, as serve to make him wretched even here, besides his final misery: this enlarged on: stings of conscience described: comforts of innocent poverty: so that they who admire the happiness of a prosperous tyrant, know not the felicities that dwell in innocent hearts, and poor cottages, and small fortunes.

A Christian, so long as he preserves his integrity, is bold in all accidents; he dares to die, and he dares to be poor; but if the persecutor dies, he is undone: this topic dilated on.

God hath many ends of providence to serve by the hands of violent and vicious men. By them he not only checks the beginnings of error and sin among his predestinate; but by them he changes governments, alters kingdoms, and is terrible among the children of men: this subject enlarged on.

He that shrinks from the yoke of Christ, from the burden of the Lord, will have cause, on his death-bed, to remember that by that time all his persecutions would have been over, and nothing would remain for him but a crown of glory: this topic enlarged on and illustrated. Conclusion.

PART III.

But that the persecuted may be aided as far as they are capable, some rules are propounded, by which they may learn to *gather grapes from their thorns.* Sorrow must be endured: but the evil and danger of the suffering must be declined, and turned, by spiritual arts, into medicine and health.

1. They that suffer any thing for Christ, and are ready to die for him, let them do nothing against him; for certainly they think too highly of martyrdom, who believe it able to excuse the evils of a wicked life. *A man,* says the Apostle, *may give his body to be burned, and yet have no charity;* and he

that dies without charity, dies without God: this topic enlarged on.

2. He that suffers in a cause of God, must be indifferent what the instance be, so that he may serve God; must be indifferent in the suffering, so it be of God's appointment: let us choose God, and let him choose all the rest for us.

3. Whoever suffer in a cause of God, let them not be too forward to prognosticate evil and death to their enemies; but let them solace themselves in the assurance of the divine justice, by general considerations; and in particular, let them pray for their persecutors: this topic illustrated.

4. Do not trouble yourself by thinking how much you are afflicted, but consider how much you make of it: for reflections, &c., on the suffering itself can lead to nothing but pride, impatience, temptation, or apostasy. He that measures the grains and scruples of his persecution, will soon sit down and call for ease, or for a reward, &c.

5. Let your suffering be entertained by a direct election, not by collateral aids and fantastic assistances: this particularly applied to the case of martyrdom. And let no man hope to glorify God and gain heaven by a life of sufferings, unless he first begin in the love of God, and thence derive his choice and patience, &c.: this topic dilated on.

6. Lastly, when God has brought you into Christ's school, and entered you into a state of sufferings, remember the advantages of that state: consider how unsavory earthly things will appear to you, when under the arrest of death; the comforts of God's Spirit; the sweets of religion; the vanity of sin's appearances; your new resolutions; your longings after heaven; and all the things of God. And if God finishes your persecutions with death, proceed in them: if he restores you to the light of the world, change but the scene of sufferings into an active life, and keep your former principles: this topic enlarged on.

The whole of the foregoing discourse is now to be made use of, being removed to its utmost spiritual sense, which the Apostle does in the last words of the text: *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?*

1. These words are taken out of Proverbs xi. 31. according to the translation of the LXX. *If the righteous scarcely be safe:* where the word μόλις implies that he is safe, but by intermedial difficulties: and σώζεται, he is safe in the midst of his persecutions: they may disturb his rest, and discompose his fancy; but they are like the fiery chariot to Elijah; he is carried up to heaven in a robe of flames: this topic enlarged on.

2. But μόλις may also signify *raro. If the righteous be seldom safe:* which implies that he sometimes is, even in a temporal sense. God sometimes sends halcyon days to his church, though it is often the greatest blessing not to give us such too freely. But this is μόλις, scarcely done: and yet at times it is, and God refreshes languishing piety with such arguments as comply with our infirmities, to support our weak flesh, &c. and to this purpose also he sometimes sends the thunderbolts of his wrath against evil men, destroying their strongholds, &c.

And yet, the worst of evils that can happen to the godly, are better, temporally better, than the greatest external felicity of the wicked.

If it be hard with good men, with the evil it shall be far worse. The godly man is timorous, and yet safe; impaired by evil accidents, but righted by divine comforts; abused by the world, but yet an heir of heaven; he hath nothing to afflict him but the loss of that which might be his danger; and, in recompense for this, he hath God for his father, Christ for his captain, the Holy Ghost for his comforter.

But though Paul and Silas sang psalms in prison, under the hangman's whip, and in an earthquake; yet neither the jailer, nor the persecuting magistrates could do so: for the prosperity of the wicked is like the winter's sun, or the joy of a con-

demned drunkard: this state dilated on at large. The godly, in short, are not made unhappy by their sorrows; and the wicked are such, whom prosperity itself cannot make fortunate.

3. And yet, after all this, it is but μόλις σώζεται, not σωθήσεται: he "escapes but hardly here:" it will be well enough with him hereafter. When persecution hews a man down from a high fortune to the face of the earth, or from thence to the grave, the good man is but preparing for a crown; and the tyrant does but first knock off the fetters of the soul, the manacles of passion and desire: and if God suffers him to finish the persecution, he then can but dismantle the soul's prison, and let the soul itself forth to fly unto the mountains of rest: this topic enlarged on: also the state of the prosperous wicked, who are as it were fatted for the slaughter, crowned for the sacrifice. Miserable indeed are they who cannot be blessed, unless there be no day of judgment; who must perish, unless the word of God should fail.

SERMON V.

THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS; OR, THE RIGHTEOUS CAUSE OPPRESSED.

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1 PETER, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 17, 18.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

PART I.

So long as the world lived by sense, and discourses of natural reason, as they were abated with human infirmities, and not at all heightened by the Spirit and divine revelations; so long men took their accounts of good and bad by their being prosperous or unfortunate: and amongst the basest and most ignorant of men, that only was accounted honest which was profitable; and he only wise that was rich; and those men beloved of God, who received from him all that might satisfy their lust, their ambition, or their revenge.

——— Fatis accede, Deisque,
Et cole felices, miseros fuge: sidera terra
Ut distant, ut flamma mari, sic utile recto.*

But because God sent wise men into the world, and they were treated rudely by the world, and exercised with evil acci-

* Lucan, Phars. viii. 486. Oudend.

dents, and this seemed so great a discouragement to virtue, that even these wise men were more troubled to reconcile virtue and misery, than to reconcile their affections to the suffering; God was pleased to enlighten their reason with a little beam of faith, or else heightened their reason by wiser principles than those of vulgar understandings, and taught them in the clear glass of faith, or the dim perspective of philosophy, to look beyond the cloud, and there to spy that there stood glories behind their curtain, to which they could not come but by passing through the cloud, and being wet with the dew of heaven and the waters of affliction. And according as the world grew more enlightened by faith, so it grew more dark with mourning and sorrows. God sometimes sent a light of fire, and a pillar of a cloud, and the brightness of an angel, and the lustre of a star, and the sacrament of a rainbow, to guide his people through their portion of sorrows, and to lead them through troubles to rest: but as the Sun of Righteousness approached towards the chambers of the east, and sent the harbingers of light peeping through the curtains of the night, and leading on the day of faith and brightest revelation; so God sent degrees of trouble on wise and good men, that now, in the same degree in the which the world lives by faith and not by sense, in the same degree they might be able to live in virtue even while she lived in trouble, and not reject so great a beauty, because she goes in mourning, and hath a black cloud of Cyprus drawn before her face. Literally thus: God first entertained their services, and allured and prompted on the infirmities of the infant-world by temporal prosperity; but by degrees changed his method; and as men grew stronger in the knowlege of God, and the expectations of heaven, so they grew weaker in their fortunes, more afflicted in their bodies, more abated in their expectations, more subject to their enemies, and were to endure the contradiction of sinners, and the immission of the sharpnesses of Providence and divine economy.

First, Adam was placed in a garden of health and pleasure, from which when he fell, he was only tied to enter into the covenant of natural sorrows, which he and all his posterity till the flood ran through; but in all that period they had the whole

wealth of the earth before them; they needed not fight for empires, or places for their cattle to graze in; they lived long, and felt no want, no slavery, no tyranny, no war; and the evils that happened, were single, personal, and natural; and no violences were then done, but they were like those things which the law calls "rare contingences;" for which as the law can now take no care and make no provisions, so then there was no law, but men lived free, and rich, and long, and they exercised no virtues but natural, and knew no felicity but natural: and so long their prosperity was just as was their virtue, because it was a natural instrument towards all that which they knew of happiness. But this public easiness and quiet, the world turned into sin; and unless God did compel men to do themselves good, they would undo themselves: and then God broke in on them with a flood, and destroyed that generation, that he might begin the government of the world on a new stock, and bind virtue on men's spirits by new bands, endeared to them by new hopes and fears.

Then God made new laws, and gave to princes the power of the sword, and men might be punished to death in certain cases, and man's life was shortened, and slavery was brought into the world and the state of servants: and then war began, and evils multiplied on the face of the earth; in which it is naturally certain, that they that are most violent and injurious prevailed on the weaker and more innocent; and every tyranny that began from Nimrod to this day, and every usurper, was a peculiar argument to show that God began to teach the world virtue by suffering; and that therefore he suffered tyrannies and usurpations to be in the world, and to be prosperous, and the rights of men to be snatched away from the owners, that the world might be established in potent and settled governments, and the sufferers be taught all the passive virtues of the soul. For so God brings good out of evil, turning tyranny into the benefits of government, and violence into virtue, and sufferings into rewards. And this was the second change of the world: personal miseries were brought in on Adam and his posterity, as a punishment of sin in the first period; and in the second, public evils were brought in by tyrants and usurpers, and

God suffered them as the first elements of virtue, men being just newly put to school to infant sufferings. But all this was not much.

Christ's line was not yet drawn forth; it began not to appear in what family the King of sufferings should descend, till Abraham's time; and therefore till then there were no greater sufferings than what I have now reckoned. But when Abraham's family was chosen from among the many nations, and began to belong to God by a special right, and he was designed to be the father of the Messias; then God found out a new way to try him, even with a sound affliction, commanding him to offer his beloved Isaac: but this was accepted, and being intended by Abraham, was not intended by God: for this was a type of Christ, and therefore was also but a type of sufferings. And excepting the sufferings of the old periods, and the sufferings of nature and accident, we see no change made for a long time after; but God having established a law in Abraham's family, did build it on promises of health, and peace, and victory, and plenty, and riches; and so long as they did not prevaricate the law of their God, so long they were prosperous: but God kept a remnant of Canaanites in the land, like a rod held over them, to vex or to chastise them into obedience, in which while they persevered, nothing could hurt them; and that saying of David needs no other sense but the letter of its own expression, 'I have been young, and now am old; and yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.' The godly generally were prosperous, and a good cause seldom had an ill end, and a good man never died an ill death, till the law had spent a great part of its time, and it descended towards its declension and period. But, that the great Prince of sufferings might not appear on his stage of tragedies without some forerunners of sorrow, God was pleased to choose out some good men, and honor them, by making them to become little images of suffering. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah were martyrs of the law; but these were single deaths: Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego were thrown into a burning furnace, and Daniel into a den of lions, and Susanna was accused for adultery; but these were but little arrests of the prosperity of the godly. As the time drew nearer that Christ should be manifest, so the

sufferings grew bigger and more numerous: and Antiochus raised up a sharp persecution in the time of the Maccabees, in which many passed through the red sea of blood into the bosom of Abraham; and then Christ came. And that was the third period in which the changed method of God's providence was perfected: for Christ was to do his great work by sufferings, and by sufferings was to enter into blessedness; and by his passion he was made Prince of the catholic church, and as our head was, so must the members be. God made the same covenant with us that he did with his most holy Son, and Christ obtained no better conditions for us than for himself; that was not to be looked for; 'the servant must not be above his master; it is well if he be as his master: if the world persecuted him, they will also persecute us:' and 'from the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force;' not 'the violent doers,' but 'the sufferers of violence:' for though the old law was established in the promises of temporal prosperity, yet the gospel is founded in temporal adversity; it is directly a covenant of sufferings and sorrows; for now 'the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.' That is the sense and design of the text; and I intend it as a direct antimony to the common persuasions of tyrannous, carnal, and vicious men, who reckon nothing good but what is prosperous: for though that proposition had many degrees of truth in the beginning of the law, yet the case is now altered, God hath established its contradictory; and now every good man must look for persecution, and every good cause must expect to thrive by the sufferings and patience of holy persons: and, as men do well, and suffer evil, so they are dear to God; and whom he loves most, he afflicts most, and does this with a design of the greatest mercy in the world.

1. Then, the state of the gospel is a state of sufferings, not of temporal prosperities. This was foretold by the prophets: 'A fountain shall go out of the house of the Lord, *et irrigabit torrentem spinarum* (so it is in the Vulgar Latin), and it shall water the torrent of thorns,'* that is, the state or time of the gospel, which, like a torrent, shall carry all the world before

* Joel, iii. 18.

it, and, like a torrent, shall be fullest in ill weather; and by its banks shall grow nothing but thorns and briers, sharp afflictions, temporal infelicities, and persecution. This sense of the words is more fully explained in the book of the prophet Isaiah: 'On the ground of my people shall thorns and briers come up; how much more in all the houses of the city of rejoicing!'* Which prophecy is the same in the style of the prophets, that my text is in the style of the Apostles. The house of God shall be watered with the dew of heaven, and there shall spring up briers in it: 'Judgment must begin there; but how much more in the houses of the city of rejoicing!' how much more amongst 'them that are at ease in Sion,' that serve their desires, that satisfy their appetites, that are given over to their own hearts' lust, that so serve themselves, that they never serve God, that 'dwell in the city of rejoicing!' They are like Dives, whose portion was in this life, 'who went in fine linen, and fared deliciously every day:' they, indeed, trample on their briers and thorns, and suffer them not to grow in their houses; but the roots are in the ground, and they are reserved for fuel of wrath in the day of everlasting burning. Thus, you see, it was prophesied, now see how it was performed; Christ was the captain of our sufferings, and he began.

He entered into the world with all the circumstances of poverty. He had a star to illustrate his birth; but a stable for his bedchamber, and a manger for his cradle. The angels sang hymns when he was born; but he was cold and cried, uneasy and unprovided. He lived long in the trade of a carpenter; he, by whom God made the world, had, in his first years, the business of a mean and ignoble trade. He did good wherever he went; and almost wherever he went, was abused. He deserved heaven for his obedience, but found a cross in his way thither: and if ever any man had reason to expect fair usages from God, and to be dandled in the lap of ease, softness, and a prosperous fortune, he it was only that could deserve that, or any thing that can be good. But, after he had chosen to live a life of virtue, of poverty, and labor, he entered into a state of death, whose shame and trouble were great enough to

* Isa. xxxii. 13.

pay for the sins of the whole world. And I shall choose to express this mystery in the words of Scripture. He died not by a single or a sudden death, but he was the 'Lamb slain from the beginning of the world:' for he was massacred in Abel, saith St. Paulinus; he was tossed on the waves of the sea in the person of Noah; it was he that went out of his country, when Abraham was called from Charran, and wandered from his native soil; he was offered up in Isaac, persecuted in Jacob, betrayed in Joseph, blinded in Samson, affronted in Moses, sawed in Isaiah, cast into the dungeon with Jeremiah: for all these were types of Christ suffering. And then his passion continued even after his resurrection. For it is he that suffers in all his members; it is he that 'endures the contradiction of all sinners;' it is he that is 'the Lord of life, and is crucified again, and put to open shame' in all the sufferings of his servants, and sins of rebels, and defiances of apostates and renegados, and violence of tyrants, and injustice of usurpers, and the persecutions of his church. It is he that is stoned in St. Stephen, flayed in the person of St. Bartholomew: he was roasted on St. Laurence's gridiron, exposed to lions in St. Ignatius, burnt in St. Polycarp, frozen in the lake where stood forty martyrs of Cappadocia. *Unigenitus enim Dei ad peragendum mortis suæ sacramentum consummavit omne genus humanarum passionum*, said St. Hilary; "The sacrament of Christ's death is not to be accomplished but by suffering all the sorrows of humanity."

All that Christ came for, was, or was mingled with, sufferings: for all those little joys which God sent, either to recreate his person, or to illustrate his office, were abated, or attended with afflictions; God being more careful to establish in him the covenant of sufferings, than to refresh his sorrows. Presently after the angels had finished their hallelujahs, he was forced to fly to save his life; and the air became full of shrieks of the desolate mothers of Bethlehem for their dying babes. God had no sooner made him illustrious with a voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on him in the waters of baptism, but he was delivered over to be tempted and assaulted by the devil in the wilderness. His transfiguration was a bright ray of glory; but then also he entered into a cloud,

and was told a sad story what he was to suffer at Jerusalem. And on Palm Sunday, when he rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and was adorned with the acclamations of a King and a God, he wet the palms with his tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls of heaven, that descended on Mount Hermon; weeping, in the midst of this triumph, over obstinate, perishing, and malicious Jerusalem. For this Jesus was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds as a sacrament to confirm a promise, and establish a grace; he was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud; in his best days he was but half triumph and half sorrow: he was sent to tell of his Father's mercies, and that God intended to spare us; but appeared not but in the company or in the retinue of a shower, and of foul weather. But I need not tell that Jesus, beloved of God, was a suffering person: that which concerns this question most, is, that he made for us a covenant of sufferings: his doctrines were such as expressly and by consequent enjoin and suppose sufferings, and a state of affliction; his very promises were sufferings; his beatitudes were sufferings; his rewards, and his arguments to invite men to follow him, were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter.

For if we sum up the commandments of Christ, we shall find humility,—mortification,—self-denial,—repentance,—renouncing the world,—mourning,—taking up the cross,—dying for him,—patience and poverty,—to stand in the chiefest rank of Christian precepts, and in the direct order to heaven: 'He that will be my disciple, must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' We must follow him that was crowned with thorns and sorrows, him that was drenched in Cedron, nailed on the cross, that deserved all good, and suffered all evil: that is the sum of Christian religion, as it distinguishes from all religions in the world. To which we may add the express precept recorded by St. James; 'Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into weeping.'* You see the commandments: will you also see the promises? These they are. 'In the

* James, iv. 9.

world ye shall have tribulation; in me ye shall have peace;—Through many tribulations ye shall enter into heaven:—He that loseth father and mother, wives and children, houses and lands, for my name's sake and the gospel, shall receive a hundred fold in this life, with persecution;' that is part of his reward: and, 'He chastiseth every son that he receiveth;—if ye be exempt from sufferings, ye are bastards, and not sons.' These are some of Christ's promises: will you see some of Christ's blessings that he gives his church? 'Blessed are the poor: blessed are the hungry and thirsty: blessed are they that mourn: blessed are the humble: blessed are the persecuted.'* Of the eight beatitudes, five of them have temporal misery and meanness, or an afflicted condition, for their subject. Will you at last see some of the rewards which Christ hath propounded to his servants, to invite them to follow him? 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me:' when Christ is 'lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,' that is, lifted on the cross, then 'he will draw us after him.'—'To you it is given for Christ,' saith St. Paul, when he went to sweeten and to flatter the Philippians:† well, what is given to them? some great favors surely; true; 'It is not only given that you believe in Christ,'—though that be a great matter—'but also that you suffer for him,' that is the highest of your honor. And therefore St. James, 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations:'‡ and St. Peter, 'Communicating with the sufferings of Christ, rejoice.'§ And St. James again, 'We count them blessed that have suffered:'‖ and St. Paul, when he gives his blessing to the Thessalonians, useth this form of prayer; 'Our Lord direct your hearts in the charity of God, and in the patience and sufferings of Christ.'¶ So that if we will serve the King of sufferings, whose crown was of thorns, whose sceptre was a reed of scorn, whose imperial robe was a scarlet of mockery, whose throne was the cross; we must serve him in sufferings, in poverty of spirit, in humility and mortification; and for our

* Matt. v. † Phil. i. 29. ‡ James, i. 2.
§ 1 Pet. iv. 13. ‖ James, v. 11.
¶ 2 Thes. iii. 5. Heb. ii. 10.

reward we shall have persecution, and all its blessed consequents. *Atque hoc est esse Christianum.*

Since this was done in the green tree, what might we expect should be done in the dry? Let us, in the next place, consider how God hath treated his saints and servants in the descending ages of the gospel: that if the best of God's servants were followers of Jesus in this covenant of sufferings, we may not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, as if some new thing had happened to us.* For as the gospel was founded in sufferings, we shall also see it grow in persecutions: and as Christ's blood did cement the corner-stones, and the first foundations; so the blood and sweat, the groans and sighings, the afflictions and mortifications, of saints and martyrs, did make the superstructures, and must at last finish the building.

If we begin with the Apostles, who were to persuade the world to become Christian, and to use proper arguments of invitations, we shall find that they never offered an argument of temporal prosperity; they never promised empires and thrones on earth, nor riches, nor temporal power: and it would have been soon confuted, if they who were whipped and imprisoned, banished and scattered, persecuted and tormented, should have promised sunshine days to others, which they could not to themselves. Of all the Apostles there was not one that died a natural death but only St. John;† and did he escape? Yes: but he was put into a cauldron of scalding lead and oil before the Porta Latina in Rome, and escaped death by miracle, though no miracle was wrought to make him escape the torture. And, besides this, he lived long in banishment, and that was worse than St. Peter's chains. *Sanctus Petrus in vinculis, et Johannes ante Portam Latinam*, were both days of martyrdom, and church-festivals. And after a long and laborious life, and the affliction of being detained from his crown, and his sorrows for the death of his fellow-disciples, he died full of days and sufferings. And when St. Paul was taken into the apostolate, his commissions were signed in these words; 'I will show unto him how great things he must suffer for my name:'‡ And his whole life was a continual suffering. *Quotidie morior* was his

* 1 Pet. iv. 12. † Tertul. S. Hieron. ‡ Acts ix. 16.

motto, 'I die daily;' and his lesson that he daily learned was, to 'know Christ Jesus, and him crucified;' and all his joy was 'to rejoice in the cross of Christ;' and the changes of his life were nothing but the changes of his sufferings, and the variety of his labors. For though Christ hath finished his own sufferings for expiation of the world; yet there are ὑστερήματα θλίψεων, 'portions that are behind of the sufferings' of Christ, which must be filled up by his body, the church; and happy are they that put in the greatest symbol; for 'in the same measure you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, in the same shall ye be also of the consolation.' And therefore, concerning St. Paul, as it was also concerning Christ, there is nothing, or but very little, in Scripture, relating to his person and chances of his private life, but his labors and persecutions; as if the Holy Ghost did think nothing fit to stand on record for Christ but sufferings.

And now began to work the greatest glory of the divine providence: here was the case of Christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned and full of wise men; the gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and in demonstration of the Spirit: God was on one side, and the devil on the other; they each of them dressed up their city; Babylon on earth, Jerusalem from above. The devil's city was full of pleasure, triumphs, victories, and cruelty; good news, and great wealth; conquest over kings, and making nations tributary: they 'bound kings in chains, and the nobles with links of iron;' and the inheritance of the earth was theirs: the Romans were lords over the greatest part of the world; and God permitted to the devil the firmament and increase, the wars and the success of that people giving to him an intire power of disposing the great change of the world, so as might best increase their greatness and power: and he therefore did it, because all the power of the Roman greatness was a professed enemy to Christianity. And on the other side, God was to build up Jerusalem, and the kingdom of the gospel; and he chose to build it of hewn stone, cut and broken: the Apostles he chose for preachers, and they had no learning; women and mean people were the first disciples, and they had no power; the devil was to lose his kingdom, he wanted no

malice: and therefore he stirred up, and, as well as he could, he made active all the power of Rome, and all the learning of the Greeks, and all the malice of barbarous people, and all the prejudice and the obstinacy of the Jews, against this doctrine and institution, which preached, and promised, and brought persecution along with it. On the one side, there was *scandalum crucis;* on the other, *patientia sanctorum:* and what was the event? They that had overcome the world, could not strangle Christianity. But so have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the power of darkness, and, without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so retire, that its memory was lost in the joys and spritefulness of the morning: and Christianity, without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength or human eloquence, without challenging of privileges or fighting against tyranny, without alteration of government and scandal of princes, with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the world into Christian, and persecution into victory.

For Christ, who began, and lived, and died in sorrows, perceiving his own sufferings to succeed so well, and that 'for suffering death, he was crowned with immortality,' resolved to take all his disciples and servants to the fellowship of the same suffering, that they might have a participation of his glory; knowing, God had opened no gate of heaven but 'the narrow gate,' to which the cross was the key. And since Christ now being our high-priest in heaven, intercedes for us by representing his passion, and the dolors of the cross, that even in glory he might still preserve the mercies of his past sufferings, for which the Father did so delight in him; he also designs to present us to God dressed in the same robe, and treated in the same manner, and honored with 'the marks of the Lord Jesus;' 'He hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son.' And if under a head crowned with thorns, we bring to God members circled with roses, and softness, and delicacy, triumphant members in the militant church, God will reject us, he will not know us who are so unlike our elder brother; for we are members of the Lamb, not of the lion; and of Christ's

suffering part, not of the triumphant part: and for three hundred years together the church lived on blood, and was nourished with blood; the blood of her own children. Thirty-three bishops of Rome in immediate succession were put to violent and unnatural deaths; and so were all the churches of the east and west built; the cause of Christ and of religion was advanced by the sword, but it was the sword of the persecutors, not of resisters or warriors: they were 'all baptised into the death of Christ;' their very profession and institution is to live like him, and, when he requires it, to die for him; that is the very formality, the life and essence, of Christianity. This, I say, lasted for three hundred years, that the prayers, and the backs, and the necks of Christians fought against the rods and axes of the persecutors, and prevailed, till the country, and the cities, and the court itself, was filled with Christians. And by this time the army of martyrs was vast and numerous, and the number of sufferers blunted the hangman's sword. For Christ had triumphed over the princes and powers of the world, before he would admit them to serve him; he first felt their malice, before he would make use of their defence; to show, that it was not his necessity that required it, but his grace that admitted kings and queens to be nurses of the church.

And now the church was at ease, and she that sucked the blood of the martyrs so long, began now to suck the milk of queens. Indeed it was a great mercy in appearance, and was so intended, but it proved not so. But then the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of the design of Christ, who meant by suffering to perfect his church, as himself was by the same instrument,—was pleased, now that persecution did cease, to inspire the church with the spirit of mortification and austerity; and then they made colleges of sufferers, persons who, to secure their inheritance in the world to come, did cut off all their portion in this, excepting so much of it as was necessary to their present being; and by instruments of humility, by patience under, and a voluntary undertaking of, the cross, the burden of the Lord,—by self-denial, by fastings and sackcloth, and permoctations in prayer, they chose then to exercise the active part of the religion, mingling it as much as they could with the suffering.

And indeed it is so glorious a thing to be like Christ, to be

dressed like the Prince of the catholic church, who was 'a man of sufferings,' and to whom a prosperous and unafflicted person is very unlike, that in all ages the servants of God have 'put on the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left;' that is, in the sufferings of persecution, or the labors of mortification; in patience under the rod of God, or by election of our own; by toleration or self-denial; by actual martyrdom, or by aptness or disposition towards it; by dying for Christ, or suffering for him; by being willing to part with all when he calls for it, and by parting with what we can for the relief of his poor members. For, know this, there is no state in the church so serene, no days so prosperous, in which God does not give to his servants the powers and opportunities of suffering for him; not only they that die for Christ, but they that live according to his laws, shall find some lives to part with, and many ways to suffer for Christ. To kill and crucify the old man and all his lusts, to mortify a beloved sin, to fight against temptations, to do violence to our bodies, to live chastely, to suffer affronts patiently, to forgive injuries and debts, to renounce all prejudice and interest in religion, and to choose our side for truth's sake (not because it is prosperous, but because it pleases God), to be charitable beyond our power, to reprove our betters with modesty and openness, to displease men rather than God, to be at enmity with the world that you may preserve friendship with God, to deny the importunity and troublesome kindness of a drinking friend, to own truth in despite of danger or scorn, to despise shame, to refuse worldly pleasures when they tempt your soul beyond duty or safety, to take pains in the cause of religion, the 'labor of love,' and the crossing of your anger, peevishness, and morosity: these are the daily sufferings of a Christian; and if we perform them well, will have the same reward, and an equal smart, and greater labor, than the plain suffering the hangman's sword. This I have discoursed, to represent unto you that you cannot be exempted from the similitude of Christ's sufferings; that God will shut no age nor no man from his portion of the cross; that we cannot fail of the result of this predestination, nor without our own fault be excluded from the covenant of sufferings. 'Judgment must begin at God's house,' and enters first on the sons and

heirs of the kingdom; and if it be not by the direct persecution of tyrants, it will be by the direct persecution of the devil, or infirmities of our own flesh. But because this was but the secondary meaning of the text, I return to make use of all the former discourse.

Let no Christian man make any judgment concerning his condition or his cause, by the external event of things. For although in the law of Moses, God made with his people a covenant of temporal prosperity, and 'his saints did bind the kings of the Amorites, and the Philistines, in chains, and their nobles with links of iron, and then, that was the honor which all his saints had;' yet, in Christ Jesus he made a covenant of sufferings. Most of the graces of Christianity are suffering graces; and God hath predestinated us to sufferings, and we are baptised into suffering, and our very communions are symbols of our duty, by being the sacrament of Christ's death and passion; and Christ foretold to us tribulation, and promised only that he would be with us in tribulation, that he would give us his Spirit to assist us at tribunals, and his grace to despise the world, and to contemn riches, and boldness to confess every article of the Christian faith in the face of armies and armed tyrants. And he also promised that 'all things should work together for the best to his servants,' that is, he would 'out of the eater bring meat, and out of the strong issue sweetness;' and crowns and sceptres should spring from crosses, and that the cross itself should stand on the globes and sceptres of princes; but he never promised to his servants that they should pursue kings and destroy armies, that they should reign over nations, and promote the cause of Jesus Christ, by breaking his commandment. 'The shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, the armor of righteousness, and the weapons of spiritual warfare;' these are they by which Christianity swelled from a small company, and a less reputation, to possess the chairs of doctors, and the thrones of princes, and the hearts of all men. But men, in all ages, will be tampering with shadows and toys. The Apostles at no hand could endure to hear that Christ's 'kingdom was not of this world,' and that their Master should die a sad and shameful death; though that way he was to receive his crown, and 'enter into glory.' And, after Christ's

time, when his disciples had taken up the cross, and were marching the King's highway of sorrows, there were a very great many, even the generality of Christians, for two or three ages together, who fell a dreaming that Christ should come and reign on earth again for a thousand years, and then the saints should reign in all abundance of temporal power and fortunes: but these men were content to stay for it till after the resurrection; in the mean time took up their cross, and followed after their Lord, the King of sufferings. But now-a-days, we find a generation of men who have changed the covenant of sufferings into victories and triumphs, riches and prosperous chances, and reckon their Christianity by their good fortunes; as if Christ had promised to his servants no heaven hereafter, no Spirit in the mean time to refresh their sorrows; as if he had enjoined them no passive graces; but as if to be a Christian and to be a Turk were the same thing. Mahomet entered and possessed by the sword; Christ came by the cross, entered by humility, and his saints 'possess their souls in patience.'

God was fain to multiply miracles to make Christ capable of being 'a man of sorrows;' and shall we think he will work miracles to make us delicate? He promised us a glorious portion hereafter, to which if all the sufferings of the world were put together, they are not worthy to be compared; and shall we, with Dives, choose our portion of 'good things in this life?' If Christ suffered so many things only that he might give us glory, shall it be strange that we shall suffer who are to receive his glory? It is in vain to think we shall obtain glories at an easier rate than to drink of the brook in the way in which Christ was drenched. When the devil appeared to St. Martin in a bright splendid shape, and said he was Christ; he answered, *Christus non nisi in cruce apparet suis, in hac vita.* And when St. Ignatius was newly tied in a chain to be led to his martyrdom, he cried out, *Nunc incipio esse Christianus.* And it was observed by Minutius Felix, and was indeed a great and excellent truth, *Omnes viri fortes, quos Gentiles prædicabant in exemplum, ærumnis suis inclyti floruerunt;* "the Gentiles in their whole religion never propounded any man imitable, unless the man were poor or persecuted." Brutus stood for his country's liberty, but lost his army and his life; Socrates was

put to death for speaking a religious truth; Cato chose to be on the right side, but happened to fall on the oppressed and the injured; he died together with his party.

Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*

And if God thus dealt with the best of heathens, to whom he had made no clear revelation of immortal recompenses; how little is the faith, and how much less is the patience of Christians, if they shall think much to suffer sorrow, since they so clearly see with the eye of faith the great things which are laid up for them that are 'faithful unto the death?' Faith is useless, if now, in the midst of so great pretended lights, we shall not dare to trust God, unless we have all in hand that we desire, and suffer nothing for all we can hope for. They that live by sense have no use of faith; yet our Lord Jesus, concerning whose passions the gospel speaks much, but little of his glorifications; whose shame was public, whose pains were notorious, but his joys and transfigurations were secret, and kept private; he who would not suffer his holy mother, whom in great degrees he exempted from sin, to be exempted from many and great sorrows;—certainly intends to admit none to his resurrection but by the doors of his grave, none to glory but by the way of the cross. 'If we be planted into the likeness of his death, we shall be also of his resurrection;' else on no terms. Christ took away sin from us, but he left us our share of sufferings; and the cross, which was first printed on us in the waters of baptism, must for ever be borne by us in penance, in mortification, in self-denial, and in martyrdom, and toleration, according as God shall require of us by the changes of the world, and the condition of the church.

For Christ considers nothing but souls, he values not their estates or bodies, supplying our want by his providence; and we are secured that our bodies may be killed, but cannot perish, so long as we preserve our duty and our consciences. Christ, our captain, hangs naked on the cross: our fellow-soldiers are cast into prison, torn with lions, rent in sunder with trees returning from their violent bendings, broken on wheels,

* Lucan, i. 128.

roasted on gridirons, and have had the honor not only to have a good cause, but also to suffer for it; and by faith, not by armies, by patience, not by fighting, have overcome the world. *Et sit anima mea cum Christianis:* 'I pray God my soul may be among the Christians.' And yet the Turks have prevailed on a great part of the Christian world, and have made them slaves and tributaries, and do them all spite, and are hugely prosperous: but when Christians are so, then they are tempted and put in danger, and never have their duty and their interest so well secured, as when they lose all for Christ, and are adorned with wounds or poverty, change or scorn, affronts or revilings, which are the obelisks and triumphs of a holy cause. Evil men and evil causes had need have good fortune and great success to support their persons and their pretences; for nothing but innocence and Christianity can florish in a persecution. I sum up this first discourse in a word: in all the Scripture, and in all the authentic stories of the Church, we find it often that the devil appeared in the shape of an 'angel of light,' but was never suffered so much as to counterfeit a persecuted sufferer. Say no more, therefore, as the murmuring Israelites said, 'If the Lord be with us, why have these evils apprehended us?' for if to be afflicted be a sign that God hath forsaken a man, and refuses to own his religion or his question, then he that oppresses the widow, and murders the innocent, and puts the fatherless to death, and follows Providence by doing all the evils that he can, that is, all that God suffers him,—he, I say, is the only saint and servant of God: and on the same ground the wolf and the fox may boast, when they scatter and devour a flock of lambs and harmless sheep.

SERMON V.

PART II.

It follows now that we inquire concerning the reasons of the divine Providence in this administration of affairs, so far as

he hath been pleased to draw aside the curtain, and to unfold the leaves of his counsels and predestination. And for such an inquiry we have the precedent of the prophet Jeremy; 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let us talk to thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy, that deal very treacherously? thou hast planted them, yea they have taken root; they grow, yea they bring forth fruit.'* Concerning which in general the prophet Malachi gives this account after the same complaint made: 'And now we call the proud happy; and they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and thought on his name. And they shall be mine (saith the Lord of hosts) in that day when I bind up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.'† In this interval, which is a valley of tears, it is no wonder if they rejoice who shall weep for ever; and 'they that sow in tears' shall have no cause to complain: when God gathers all the mourners into his kingdom, 'they shall reap with joy.'

For innocence and joy were appointed to dwell together for ever. And joy went not first; but when innocence went away, sorrow and sickness dispossessed joy of its habitation; and now this world must be always a scene of sorrows, and no joy can grow here but that which is imaginary and fantastic. There is no worldly joy, no joy proper for this world, but that which wicked persons fancy to themselves in the hopes and designs of iniquity. He that covets his neighbor's wife or land, dreams of fine things, and thinks it a fair condition to be rich and cursed, to be a beast and die, or to lie wallowing in his filthiness: but those holy souls who are not in love with the leprosy and the itch for the pleasure of scratching, they know no pleasure can grow from the thorns which Adam planted in the

* Jer. xii. 1, 2. † Mal. iii. 14, &c.

hedges of paradise; and that sorrow, which was brought in by sin, must not go away till it hath returned us into the first condition of innocence: the same instant that quits us from sin and the failings of mortality, the same instant wipes all tears from our eyes; but that is not in this world. In the mean time,

God afflicts the godly, that he might manifest many of his attributes, and his servants exercise many of their virtues.

> Nec fortuna probat causas, sequiturque merentes,
> Sed vaga per cunctos nullo discrimine fertur:
> Scilicet est aliud, quod nos cogatque regatque,
> Majus, et in proprias ducat mortalia leges.

For, without the sufferings of saints, God should lose the glories, 1. of bringing good out of evil: 2. of being with us in tribulation: 3. of sustaining our infirmities: 4. of triumphing over the malice of his enemies. 5. Without the suffering of saints, where were the exaltation of the cross, the conformity of the members to Christ their head, the coronets of martyrs? 6. where the trial of our faith? 7. or the exercise of long-suffering? 8. where were the opportunities to give God the greatest love? which cannot be but by dying and suffering for him. 9. How should that which the world calls folly, prove the greatest wisdom? 10. and God be glorified by events contrary to the probability and expectation of their causes? 11. By the suffering of saints, Christian religion is proved to be most excellent; whilst the iniquity and cruelty of the adversaries prove the *illecebra sectæ*, as Tertullian's phrase is; it invites men to consider the secret excellences of that religion, for which and in which men are so willing to die: for that religion must needs be worth looking into, which so many wise and excellent men do so much value above their lives and fortune. 12. That a man's nature is passible, is its best advantage; for by it we are all redeemed: by the passiveness and sufferings of our Lord and brother we were all rescued from the portion of devils, and by our suffering we have a capacity of serving God beyond that of angels, who indeed can sing God's praise with a sweeter note, and obey him with a more unabated

will, and execute his commands with a swifter wing and a greater power; but they cannot die for God, they can lose no lands for him; and he that did so for all us, and commanded us to do so for him, is ascended far above all angels, and is heir of a greater glory. 13. 'Do this, and live,' was the covenant of the law; but in the gospel it is, 'Suffer this, and live:'—'He that forsaketh house and land, friends and life, for my sake, is my disciple.' 14. By the sufferings of saints God chastises their follies and levities, and suffers not their errors to climb up into heresies, nor their infirmities into crimes.

——— παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω·

"Affliction makes a fool leave his folly." If David numbers the people of Judea, God punishes him sharply and loudly: but if Augustus Cæsar numbers all the world, he is let alone and prospers.

Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema:*

And in giving physic, we always call that just and fitting that is useful and profitable: no man complains of his physician's iniquity, if he burns one part to cure all the body; if the belly be punished to chastise the floods of humor, and the evils of a surfeit. Punishments can no other way turn into a mercy, but when they are designed for medicine; and God is then very careful of thy soul, when he will suppress every of its evils, when it first discomposes the order of things and spirits. And what hurt is it to thee, if a persecution draws thee from the vanities of a former prosperity, and forces thee into the sobrieties of a holy life? What loss is it? what misery? Is not the least sin a greater evil than the greatest of sufferings? God smites some at the beginning of their sin; others, not till a long while after it is done. The first cannot say that God is slack in punishing, and have no need to complain that the wicked are prosperous; for they find that God is apt enough to strike: and therefore, that he strikes them, and strikes not the other, is no defect of justice, but because there is not mercy in store for

* Juv. xiii. 105.

them that sin, and suffer not. 15. For if God strikes the godly that they may repent, it is no wonder that God is so good to his servants; but then we must not call that a misery, which God intends to make an instrument of saving them. And if God forbears to strike the wicked out of anger, and because he hath decreed death and hell against them, we have no reason to envy that they ride in a gilded chariot to the gallows: but if God forbear the wicked, that by his long sufferance they may be invited to repentance, then we may cease to wonder at the dispensation, and argue comforts to the afflicted saints, thus: for if God be so gracious to the wicked, how much more is he to the godly! and if sparing the wicked be a mercy; then smiting the godly, being the expression of his greater kindness, affliction is of itself the more eligible condition. If God hath some degrees of kindness for the persecutors, so much as to invite them by kindness; how much greater is his love to them that are persecuted! And therefore, his intercourse with them is also a greater favor; and, indeed, it is the surer way of securing the duty: fair means may do it, but severity will fix and secure it. Fair means are more apt to be abused than harsh physic: that may be turned into wantonness, but none but the impudent and grown sinners despise all God's judgments; and therefore, God chooses this way to deal with his erring servants, that they may obtain an infallible and a great salvation. And yet if God spares not his children, how much less the reprobates! and therefore, as sparing the latter commonly is a sad curse, so the smiting the former is a very great mercy. 16. For by this economy God gives us a great argument to prove the resurrection, since to his saints and servants he assigns sorrow for their present portion. Sorrow cannot be the reward of virtue; it may be its instrument and handmaid, but not its reward; and therefore, it may be intermedial to some great purposes, but they must look for their portion in the other life: 'For if in this life only we had hope, then we were of all men the most miserable:' it is St. Paul's argument to prove a beatifical resurrection. And we therefore may learn to estimate the state of the afflicted godly to be a mercy, great in proportion to the greatness of that reward, which these afflictions come to secure and to prove.

Nunc et damna juvant; sunt ipsa pericula tanti:
Stantia non poterant tecta probare Deos.*

It is a great matter, and infinite blessing, to escape the pains of hell; and therefore, that condition is also very blessed which God sends us, to create and confirm our hopes of that excellent mercy. 17. The sufferings of the saints are the sum of Christian philosophy: they are sent to wean us from the vanities and affections of this world, and to create in us strong desires of heaven; whiles God causes us to be here treated rudely, that we may long to be in our country, where God shall be our portion, and angels our companions, and Christ our perpetual feast, and never-ceasing joy shall be our conditions and entertainment. 'O death, how bitter art thou to a man that is at ease and rest in his possessions!'† But he that is uneasy in his body, and unquiet in his possessions, vexed in his person, discomposed in his designs, who finds no pleasure, no rest here, will be glad to fix his heart where only he shall have what he can desire, and what can make him happy. As long as the waters of persecutions are on the earth, so long we dwell in the ark: but where the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to a wandering course of life, and never to return to the house of her safety. What shall I say more? 18. Christ nourisheth his church by sufferings. 19. He hath given a single blessing to all other graces; but to them that are 'persecuted,' he hath promised a double one:‡ it being a double favor, first to be innocent like Christ, and then to be afflicted like him. 20. Without this, the miracles of patience, which God hath given to fortify the spirits of the saints, would signify nothing. *Nemo enim tolerare tanta velit sine causa, nec potuit sine Deo:* "As no man would bear evils without a cause, so no man could bear so much without the supporting hand of God;" and we need not the Holy Ghost to so great purposes, if our lot were not sorrow and persecution. And therefore, without this condition of suffering, the Spirit of God shall lose that glorious attribute of the Holy Ghost, 'the Comforter.' 21. Is there any thing more yet? Yes. They that have suffered or forsaken any lands for Christ, 'shall sit on the thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of

* Martial, i. 13. 11. † Eccles. iv. 11. ‡ Matt. v. 12.

Israel;' so said Christ to his disciples. Nay, 'the saints shall judge angels,' saith St. Paul: well therefore might St. Paul say, 'I rejoice exceedingly in tribulation.' It must be some great thing that must make an afflicted man to rejoice exceedingly; and so it was. For since patience is necessary that we receive the promise, and tribulation does work this; 'for a short time it worketh the consummation of our hope, even an exceeding weight of glory;' we have no reason to 'think it strange concerning the fiery trial, as if it were a strange thing.' It can be no hurt. The church is like Moses's bush; when it is all on fire, it is not at all consumed, but made full of miracle, full of splendor, full of God: and unless we can find something that God cannot turn into joy, we have reason not only to be patient, but rejoice, when we are persecuted in a righteous cause: for love is the soul of Christianity, and suffering is the soul of love. To be innocent, and to be persecuted, are the body and soul of Christianity. 'I, John, your brother, and partaker in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus,' said St. John:* those were the titles and ornaments of his profession: that is, 'I, John, your fellow-Christian;' that is the plain song of the former descant. He, therefore, that is troubled when he is afflicted in his outward man, that his inward man may grow strong, like the birds on the ruin of the shell, and wonders that a good man should be a beggar, and a sinner be rich with oppression; that Lazarus should die at the gate of Dives, hungry and sick, unpitied and unrelieved; may as well wonder that carrion-crows should feed themselves fat on a fair horse, far better than themselves; or that his own excellent body should be devoured by worms and the most contemptible creatures, thought it lies there to be converted into glory. That man knows nothing of nature, or Providence, or Christianity, or the rewards of virtue, or the nature of its constitution, or the infirmities of man, or the mercies of God, or the arts and prudence of his loving-kindness, or the rewards of heaven, or the glorifications of Christ's exalted humanity, or the precepts of the gospel, who is offended at the sufferings of God's dearest servants, or declines the honor and the mercy of sufferings in

* Rev. i. 9.

the cause of righteousness, for the securing of a virtue, for the imitation of Christ, and for the love of God, or the glories of immortality. It cannot, it ought not, it never will be otherwise; the world may as well cease to be measured by time, as good men to suffer affliction. I end this point with the words of St. Paul; 'Let as many as are perfect be thus minded: and if any man be otherwise minded, God also will reveal this unto you;'* *this*, of the covenant of sufferings, concerning which the old prophets and holy men of the temple had many thoughts of heart: but in the full sufferings of the gospel there hath been a full revelation of the excellency of the sufferings. I have now given you an account of some of those reasons, why God hath so disposed that at this time, that is, under the period of the gospel, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God:' and they are either τιμώριαι, or δοκιμάσιαι, or μαρτύριον, or imitation of Christ's λύτρον: 'chastisements,' or 'trials,' or 'martyrdom,' or 'a conformity to the sufferings of the holy Jesus.'

But now besides all the premises, we have another account to make concerning the prosperity of the wicked: 'For if judgment first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' that is the question of the Apostle, and is the great instrument of comfort to persons ill-treated in the actions of the world. The first ages of the church lived on promises and prophecies; and because some of them are already fulfilled for ever, and the others are of a continual and a successive nature, and are verified by the actions of every day, therefore we and all the following ages live on promises and experience. And although the servants of God have suffered many calamities from the tyranny and prevalency of evil men their enemies, yet still it is preserved as one of the fundamental truths of Christianity, that all the fair fortunes of the wicked are not enough to make them happy, nor the persecutions of the godly able to make a good man miserable, nor yet their sadnesses arguments of God's displeasure against them. For when a godly man is afflicted and dies, it is his work and his business; and if the wicked prevail, that is, if they persecute the godly, it is but that which was to be expected from them;

* Phil. iii. 15.

for who are fit to be hangmen and executioners of public wrath, but evil and ungodly persons? And can it be a wonder, that they whose cause wants reason, should betake themselves to the sword? that what he cannot persuade, he may wrest? Only we must not judge of the things of God by the measures of men. Τὰ ἀνθρώπινα, 'the things of men,' have this world for their stage and their reward; but the 'things of God' relate to the world to come: and for our own particulars we are to be guided by rule, and by the end of all; not by events intermedial, which are varied by a thousand irregular causes. For if all the evil men in the world were unprosperous,—as most certain they are; and if all good persons were temporally blessed,—as most certainly they are not; yet this would not move us to become virtuous. 'If an angel should come from heaven, or one arise from the dead,' and preach repentance, or justice, and temperance, all this would be ineffectual to those, to whom the plain doctrines of God delivered in the law and the prophets, will not suffice.

For why should God work a sign to make us to believe that we ought to do justice, if we already believe he hath commanded it? No man can need a miracle for the confirmation of that which he already believes to be the command of God: and when God hath expressly bidden us to 'obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, the king as supreme, and his deputies as sent by him;' it is a strange infidelity to think, that a rebellion against the ordinance of God can be sanctified by the success and prevalency of them, that destroy the authority, and the person, and the law, and the religion. The sin cannot grow to its height, if it be crushed at the beginning; unless it prosper in its progress, a man cannot easily fill up the measure of his iniquity: but then that sin swells to its fulness by prosperity, and grows too big to be suppressed without a miracle; it is so far from excusing or lessening the sin, that nothing doth so nurse the sin as it. It is not virtue, because it is prosperous; but if it had not been prosperous, the sin could never be so great.

Facere omnia sæve
Non impune licet, nisi cum facis ———*

* Lucan, viii. 492.

A little crime is sure to smart; but when the sinner is grown rich, and prosperous, and powerful, he gets impunity,

Jusque datum sceleri———*

But that is not innocence: and if prosperity were the voice of God to approve an action, then no man were vicious but he that is punished, and nothing were rebellion but that which cannot be easily suppressed; and no man were a pirate but he that robs with a little vessel; and no man could be a tyrant but he that is no prince; and no man an unjust invader of his neighbor's rights, but he that is beaten and overthrown. Then the crime grows big and loud, then it calls to heaven for vengeance, when it hath been long a growing, when it hath thriven under the devil's managing; when God hath long suffered it, and with patience, in vain expecting the repentance of a sinner. 'He that treasures up wrath against the day of wrath,' that man hath been a prosperous, that is, an unpunished, and a thriving sinner: but then it is the sin that thrives, not the man: and that is the mistake on this whole question; for the sin cannot thrive, unless the man goes on without apparent punishment and restraint. And all that the man gets by it is, that by a continual course of sin he is prepared for an intolerable ruin. The Spirit of God bids us look on the end of these men; not the way they walk, or the instrument of that pompous death. When Epaminondas was asked which of the three was happiest, himself, Chabrias, or Iphicrates, he bid the man stay till they were all dead; for till then that question could not be answered. He that had seen the Vandals besiege the city of Hippo, and had known the barbarousness of that unchristened people, and had observed that St. Austin with all his prayers and vows could not obtain peace in his own days, not so much as a reprieve for the persecution, and then had observed St. Austin die with grief that very night, would have perceived his calamity more visible than the reward of his piety and holy religion. When Lewis, surnamed Pius, went his voyage to Palestine on a holy end, and for the glory of God, to fight against the Saracens and Turks and Mamelukes, the world did pro-

* Lucan, i. 2.

mise to themselves that a good cause should thrive in the hands of so holy a man; but the event was far otherwise: his brother Robert was killed, and his army destroyed, and himself taken prisoner, and the money which by his mother was sent for his redemption, was cast away in a storm, and he was exchanged for the last town the Christians had in Egypt, and brought home the cross of Christ on his shoulder in a real pressure and participation of his Master's sufferings. When Charles the Fifth went to Algiers to suppress pirates and unchristened villains, the cause was more confident than the event was prosperous: and when he was almost ruined in a prodigious storm, he told the minutes of the clock, expecting that at midnight, when religious persons rose to matins, he should be eased by the benefit of their prayers: but the providence of God trod on those waters, and left no footsteps for discovery: his navy was beat in pieces, and his design ended in dishonor, and his life almost lost by the bargain. Was ever cause more baffled than the Christian cause by the Turks in all Asia and Africa, and some parts of Europe, if to be persecuted and afflicted be reckoned a calamity? What prince was ever more unfortunate than Henry the Sixth of England? and yet that age saw none more pious and devout. And the title of the house of Lancaster was advanced against the right of York for three descents. But then what was the end of these things? The persecuted men were made saints, and their memories are preserved in honor, and their souls shall reign for ever. And some good men were engaged in a wrong cause, and the good cause was sometimes managed by evil men; till that the suppressed cause was lifted up by God in the hands of a young and prosperous prince, and at last both interests were satisfied in the conjunction of two roses, which was brought to issue by a wonderful chain of causes managed by the divine Providence. And there is no age, no history, no state, no great change in the world, but hath ministered an example of an afflicted truth, and a prevailing sin: for I will never more call that sinner prosperous, who, after he hath been permitted to finish his business, shall die and perish miserably; for at the same rate we may envy the happiness of a poor fisherman, who, while his nets were drying, slept on the rock, and dreamt that he was made a king; on a

sudden starts up, and leaping for joy, falls down from the rock, and in the place of his imaginary felicities, loses his little portion of pleasure and innocent solaces he had from the sound sleep and little cares of his humble cottage.

And what is the prosperity of the wicked? To dwell in fine houses, or to command armies, or to be able to oppress their brethren, or to have much wealth to look on, or many servants to feed, or much business to despatch, and great cares to master; these things are of themselves neither good nor bad. But consider, would any man amongst us, looking and considering beforehand, kill his lawful king, to be heir of all that which I have named? Would any of you choose to have God angry with you on these terms? Would any of you be a perjured man for it all? A wise man or a good would not choose it. Would any of you die an atheist, that you might live in plenty and power? I believe you tremble to think of it. It cannot therefore be a happiness to thrive on the stock of a great sin. For if any man should contract with an impure spirit, to give his soul up at a certain day, it may be twenty years hence, on the condition he might, for twenty years, have his vain desires; should we not think that person infinitely miserable? Every prosperous thriving sinner is in the same condition: within these twenty years he shall be thrown into the portion of devils, but shall never come out thence in twenty millions of years. His wealth must needs sit uneasy on him, that remembers that within a short space he shall be extremely miserable; and if he does not remember it, he does but secure it the more. Add that God defers the punishment, and suffers evil men to thrive in the opportunities of their sin, it may and does serve many ends of providence and mercy, but serves no end that any evil man can reasonably wish or propound to themselves eligible.

Bias said well to a vicious person, *Non metuo ne non sis daturus pœnas, sed metuo ne id non sim visurus;* "He was sure the man should be punished, he was not sure he should live to see it." And though the Nessinians that were betrayed and slain by Aristocrates in the battle of Cyprus, were not made alive again; yet the justice of God was admired, and treason infinitely disgraced, when, twenty years after, the trea-

son was discovered, and the traitor punished with a horrid death. Lyciscus gave up the Orchomenians to their enemies, having first wished his feet, which he then dipped in water, might rot off, if he were not true to them; and yet his feet did not rot till those men were destroyed, and of a long time after; and yet at last they did. 'Slay them not O Lord, lest my people forget it,' saith David. If punishment were instantly and totally inflicted, it would be but a sudden and single document: but a slow and lingering judgment, and a wrath breaking out in the next age, is like a universal proposition, teaching our posterity that God was angry all the while, that he had a long indignation in his breast, that he would not forget to take vengeance. And it is a demonstration, that even the prosperous sins of the present age will find the same period in the Divine revenge, when men see a judgment on the nephews for the sins of their grandfathers, though in other instances, and for sins acted in the days of their ancestors.

We know that when, in Henry the Eighth or Edward the Sixth's days, some great men pulled down churches and built palaces, and robbed religion of its just encouragements and advantages, the men that did it were sacrilegious: and we find also, that God hath been punishing that great sin ever since; and hath displayed to so many generations of men, to three or four descents of children, that those men could not be esteemed happy in their great fortunes, against whom God was so angry, that he would show his displeasure for a hundred years together. When Herod had killed the babes of Bethlehem, it was seven years before God called him to an account: but he that looks on the end of that man, would rather choose the fate of the oppressed babes, than of the prevailing and triumphing tyrant. It was forty years before God punished the Jews for the execrable murder committed on the person of their King, the holy Jesus; and it was so long, that when it did happen, many men attributed it to their killing of St. James their bishop, and seemed to forget the greater crime. But *Non eventu rerum, sed fide verborum stamus*; "We are to stand to the truth of God's word, not to the event of things;" because God hath given us a rule, but hath left the judgment to himself; and we die so quickly (and God measures all things

by this standard of eternity, and 'one thousand years to God is as but one day'), that we are not competent persons to measure the times of God's account, and the returns of judgment. We are dead before the arrow comes; but the man escapes not, unless his soul can die, or that God cannot punish him. *Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in momento descendunt ad infernum*, that is their fate: 'They spend their days in plenty, and in a moment descend into hell.'* In the mean time they drink, and forget their sorrow; but they are condemned: they have drunk their hemlock; but the poison does not work yet: the bait is in their mouths, and they are sportive; but the hook hath struck their nostrils, and they shall never escape the ruin. And let no man call the man fortunate, because his execution is deferred for a few days, when the very deferring shall increase and ascertain the condemnation.

But if we should look under the skirt of the prosperous and prevailing tyrant, we should find, even in the days of his joys, such allays and abatements of his pleasure, as may serve to represent him presently miserable, besides his final infelicities. For I have seen a young and healthful person warm and ruddy under a poor and a thin garment, when at the same time an old rich person hath been cold and paralytic under a load of sables, and the skins of foxes. It is the body that makes the clothes warm, not the clothes the body: and the spirit of a man makes felicity and content, not any spoils of a rich fortune wrapped about a sickly and an uneasy soul. Apollodorus was a traitor and a tyrant, and the world wondered to see a bad man have so good a fortune; but knew not that he nourished scorpions in his breast, and that his liver and his heart were eaten up with spectres and images of death; his thoughts were full of interruptions, his dreams of illusions; his fancy was abused with real troubles and fantastic images, imagining that he saw the Scythians flaying him alive, his daughters like pillars of fire dancing round about a cauldron, in which himself was boiling, and that his heart accused itself to be the cause of all these evils. And although all tyrants have not imaginative and fantastic consciences, yet all tyrants shall die and come to judg-

* Job, xxi. 13.

ment; and such a man is not to be feared, not at all to be envied. And, in the mean time, can he be said to escape who hath an unquiet conscience, who is already designed for hell, he whom God hates, and the people curse, and who hath an evil name, and against whom all good men pray, and many desire to fight, and all wish him destroyed, and some contrive to do it? Is this man a blessed man? Is that man prosperous who hath stolen a rich robe, and is in fear to have his throat cut for it, and is fain to defend it with the greatest difficulty and the greatest danger? Does not he drink more sweetly that takes his beverage in an earthen vessel, than he that looks and searches into his golden chalices for fear of poison, and looks pale at every sudden noise, and sleeps in armor, and trusts nobody, and does not trust God for his safety, but does greater wickedness only to escape awhile unpunished for his former crimes? *Auro bibitur venenum.* No man goes about to poison a poor man's pitcher, nor lays plots to forage his little garden made for the hospital of two bee-hives, and the feasting of a few Pythagorean herb-eaters.

——οὐδ' ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἥμισυ παντὸς,
*Οὐδ' ὅσον ἐν μαλάχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλῳ μέγ' ὄνειαρ.**

They that admire the happiness of a prosperous, prevailing tyrant, know not the felicities that dwell in innocent hearts, and poor cottages, and small fortunes.

A Christian, so long as he preserves his integrity to God and to religion, is bold in all accidents, he dares die, and he dares be poor: but if the persecutor dies, he is undone. Riches are beholden to our fancies for their value; and yet the more we value the riches, the less good they are, and by an overvaluing affection they become our danger and our sin: but, on the other side, death and persecution lose all the ill that they can have, if we do not set an edge on them by our fears and by our vices. From ourselves riches take their wealth, and death sharpens his arrows at our forges, and we may set their prices as we please: and if we judge by the Spirit of God, we must account them happy that suffer; and therefore that the prevailing oppressor,

* Hesiod, Ἔργ. 40. Gaisford, p. 6.

tyrant, or persecutor, is infinitely miserable. Only let God choose by what instruments he will govern the world, by what instance himself would be served, by what ways he will chastise the failings, and exercise the duties, and reward the virtues of his servants. God sometimes punishes one sin with another; pride with adultery, drunkenness with murder, carelessness with irreligion, idleness with vanity, penury with oppression, irreligion with blasphemy, and that with atheism: and therefore it is no wonder if he punishes a sinner by a sinner. And if David made use of villains and profligate persons to frame an army; and Timoleon destroyed the Carthaginians by the help of soldiers who themselves were sacrilegious; and physicians use poisons to expel poisons; and all commonwealths take the basest of men to be their instruments of justice and executions; we shall have no farther cause to wonder, if God raises up the Assyrian to punish the Israelites, and the Egyptians to destroy the Assyrians, and the Ethiopians to scourge the Egyptians; and at last his own hand shall separate the good from the bad in the day of separation, in the day when he makes up his jewels.

Ποῦ ποτε κεραυνοὶ Διὸς, ἢ
Ποῦ φαέθων
Ἅλιος, εἰ ταῦτ' ἐφορῶντες
Κρύπτουσιν ἕκηλοι;*

God hath many ends of providence to serve by the hands of violent and vicious men. By them he not only checks the beginning errors and approaching sins of his predestinate; but by them he changes governments, and alters kingdoms, and is terrible among the sons of men. For since it is one of his glories to convert evil into good, and that good into his own glory, and by little and little to open and to turn the leaves and various folds of providence; it becomes us only to dwell in duty, and to be silent in our thoughts, and wary in our discourses of God; and let him choose the time when he will prune his vine, and when he will burn his thorns; how long he will smite his servants, and when he will destroy his enemies. In the days of the primitive persecutions, what prayers, how many sighings,

* Soph. Electr. 823. Scheffler.

how deep groans, how many bottles of tears, did God gather into his repository, all praying for ease and deliverances, for halcyon days and fine sunshine, 'for nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers,' for public assemblies and open and solemn sacraments; and it was three hundred years before God would hear their prayers; and all that while the persecuted people were in a cloud, but they were safe, and knew it not; and God 'kept for them the best wine until the last:' they ventured for a crown, and fought valiantly; they were 'faithful to the death, and they received a crown of life;' and they are honored by God, by angels, and by men. Whereas in all the prosperous ages of the church, we hear no stories of such multitudes of saints, no record of them, no honor to their memorial, no accident extraordinary; scarce any made illustrious with a miracle, which in the days of suffering were frequent and popular. And after all our fears of sequestration and poverty, of death or banishment, our prayers against the persecution and troubles under it, we may please to remember, that twenty years hence (it may be sooner, it will not be much longer), all our cares and our troubles shall be dead; and then it shall be inquired how we did bear our sorrows, and who inflicted them, and in what cause; and then he shall be happy that keeps company with the persecuted; and the 'persecutor shall be shut out amongst dogs and unbelievers.'

He that shrinks from the yoke of Christ, from the burden of the Lord, on his death-bed will have cause to remember that by that time all his persecutions would have been past, and that then there would remain nothing for him but rest, and crowns, and sceptres. When Lysimachus, impatient and overcome with thirst, gave up his kingdom to the Getæ, being a captive, and having drunk a lusty draught of wine, and his thirst now gone, he fetched a deep sigh, and said, "Miserable man that I am, who for so little pleasure, the pleasure of one draught, lost so great a kingdom!" Such will be their case, who, being impatient of suffering, change their persecution into wealth and an easy fortune: they shall find themselves miserable in the separations of eternity, losing the glories of heaven for so little a pleasure, *illiberalis et ingratæ voluptatis causa*, as Plutarch calls it, "for illiberal and ungrateful pleasure;"

in which when a man hath entered, he loses the rights and privileges and honors of a good man, and gets nothing that is profitable and useful to holy purposes, or necessary to any; but is already in a state so hateful and miserable, that he needs neither God nor man to be revenger, having already under his splendid robe miseries enough to punish and betray this hypocrisy of his condition; being troubled with the memory of what is past, distrustful of the present, suspicious of the future, vicious in their lives, and full of pageantry and outsides, but in their death miserable with calamities real, eternal, and insupportable. And if it could be otherwise, virtue itself would be reproached with the calamity.

Εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν θανὼν
Γᾶ τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὢν
Κείσεται τάλας·
Οἱ δὲ μὴ πάλιν
Δώσουσιν ἀντιφόνους δίκας,
Ἔρβοι τ' ἂν αἰδὼς, ἀπάντων
*τ' εὐσέβεια θνατῶν.**

I end with the advice of St. Paul; 'In nothing be terrified of your adversaries; which to them is an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.'

SERMON V.

PART III.

But now, that the persecuted may at least be pitied, and assisted in that of which they are capable, I shall propound some rules by which they may learn to gather grapes from their thorns, and figs from their thistles; crowns from the cross, glory from dishonor. As long as they belong to God, it is necessary that they suffer persecution or sorrow; no rules can

* Soph. Elect. 244. Scheffler.

teach them to avoid that: but the evil of the suffering and the danger must be declined, and we must use some such spiritual arts as are apt to turn them into health and medicine. For it were a hard thing first to be scourged, and then to be crucified; to suffer here, and to perish hereafter: through the fiery trial and purging fire of afflictions to pass into hell, that is intolerable, and to be prevented with the following cautions; lest a man suffer like a fool and a malefactor, or inherit damnation for the reward of his imprudent suffering.

1. They that suffer any thing for Christ, and are ready to die for him, let them do nothing against him. For certainly they think too highly of martyrdom, who believe it able to excuse all the evils of a wicked life. A man may 'give his body to be burned, and yet have no charity:' and he that dies without charity, dies without God; 'for God is love.' And when those who fought in the days of the Maccabees for the defence of true religion, and were killed in those holy wars, yet being dead, were found having about their necks ἱερώματα, or "pendants consecrated" to idols of the Jamnenses; it much allayed the hope, which, by their dying in so good a cause, was entertained concerning their beatifical resurrection. He that overcomes his fear of death does well; but if he hath not also overcome his lust, or his anger, his baptism of blood will not wash him clean. Many things may make a man willing to die in a good cause; public reputation, hope of reward, gallantry of spirit, a confident resolution, and a masculine courage; or a man may be vexed into a stubborn and unrelenting suffering: but nothing can make a man live well, but the grace and the love of God. But those persons are infinitely condemned by their last act, who profess their religion to be worth dying for, and yet are so unworthy as not to live according to its institution. It were a rare felicity, if every good cause could be managed by good men only; but we have found that evil men have spoiled a good cause, but never that a good cause made those evil men good and holy. If the governor of Samaria had crucified Simon Magus for receiving Christian baptism, he had no more died a martyr than he lived a saint: for dying is not enough, and dying in a good cause is not enough; but then

only we receive the crown of martyrdom, when our death is the seal of our life, and our life is a continual testimony of our duty, and both give testimony to the excellences of the religion, and glorify the grace of God. If a man be gold, the fire purges him; but it burns him if he be, like stubble, cheap, light, and useless: for martyrdom is the consummation of love. But then it must be supposed that this grace must have had its beginning, and its several stages and periods, and must have passed through labor to zeal, through all the regions of duty to the perfections of sufferings. And therefore it is a sad thing to observe how some empty souls will please themselves with being of such a religion or such a cause; and though they dishonor their religion, or weigh down the cause with the prejudice of sin, believe all is swallowed up by one honorable name, or the appellative of one virtue. If God had forbid nothing but heresy and treason, then to have been a loyal man, or of a good belief, had been enough; but he that forbade rebellion, forbids also swearing and covetousness, rapine and oppression, lying and cruelty. And it is a sad thing to see a man not only to spend his time, and his wealth, and his money, and his friends, on his lust; but to spend his sufferings too, to let the canker-worm of a deadly sin devour his martyrdom. He therefore that suffers in a good cause, let him be sure to walk worthy of that honor to which God hath called him; let him first deny his sins, and then 'deny himself,' and then he may 'take up his cross and follow Christ;' ever remembering that no man pleases God in his death, who hath walked perversely in his life.

2. He that suffers in a cause of God, must be indifferent what the instance be, so that he may serve God. I say, he must be indifferent in the cause, so it be a cause of God; and indifferent in the suffering, so it be of God's appointment. For some men have a natural aversation to some vices or virtues, and a natural affection to others. One man will die for his friend, and another will die for his money: some men hate to be a rebel, and will die for their prince; but tempt them to suffer for the cause of the church, in which they were baptised, and in whose communion they look for heaven, and then they are tempted, and fall away. Or if God hath chosen the cause

for them, and they have accepted it, yet themselves will choose the suffering. Right or wrong, some men will not endure a prison; and some that can yet choose the heaviest part of the burden, the pollution and stain of a sin, rather than lose their money; and some had rather die twice than lose their estates once. In this, our rule is easy. Let us choose God, and let God choose all the rest for us; it being indifferent to us, whether by poverty or shame, by a lingering or a sudden death, by the hands of a tyrant-prince, or the despised hands of a base usurper or a rebel, we receive the crown, and do honor to God and to religion.

3. Whoever suffer in a cause of God, from the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, let them not be too forward to prognosticate evil and death to their enemies; but let them solace themselves in the assurance of the divine justice, by general consideration, and, in particular, pray for them that are our persecutors. Nebuchadnezzar was the rod in the hand of God against the Tyrians; and because he destroyed that city, God rewarded him with the spoil of Egypt: and it is not always certain that God will be angry with every man, by whose hand affliction comes on us. And sometimes two armies have met, and fought, and the wisest man amongst them could not say, that either of the princes had prevaricated either the laws of God or of nations; and yet, it may be, some superstitious, easy, and half-witted people of either side wonder that their enemies live so long. And there are very many cases of war, concerning which God hath declared nothing: and although in such cases, he that yields and quits his title, rather than his charity, and the care of so many lives, is the wisest and the best man; yet, if neither of them will do so, let us not decree judgments from heaven, in cases where we have no word from heaven, and thunder from our tribunals, where no voice of God hath declared the sentence. But in such cases, where there is an evident tyranny or injustice, let us do like the good Samaritan, who dressed the wounded man, but never pursued the thief; let us do charity to the afflicted, and bear the cross with nobleness, and 'look up to Jesus, who endured the cross, and despised the shame:' but let us not take on us the office of God, who will judge the nations righteously, and when he hath

delivered up our bodies, will rescue our souls from the hands of unrighteous judges. I remember in the story that Plutarch tells, concerning the soul of Thespesius, that it met with a prophetic genius, who told him many things that should happen afterward in the world; and the strangest of all was this; that there should be a king, *qui bonus cum sit, tyrannide vitam finiet;* "an excellent prince and a good man should be put to death by a rebel and usurping power:"—and yet, that prophetic soul could not tell, that those rebels should, within three years, die miserable and accursed deaths. And in that great prophecy, recorded by St. Paul, 'That in the last days, perilous times should come, and men should be traitors and selfish, having forms of godliness, and creeping into houses;'* yet he could not tell us, when these men should come to final shame and ruin: only by a general signification, he gave this sign of comfort to God's persecuted servants: 'but they shall proceed no farther, for their folly shall be manifest to all men;'† that is, at long running, they shall shame themselves, and, 'for the elect's sake, those days of evil shall be shortened.' But you and I may be dead first: and therefore, only remember, that they, that, with a credulous heart and a loose tongue, are too decretory and enunciative of speedy judgments to their enemies, turn their religion into revenge, and therefore, do believe it will be so, because they vehemently desire it should be so; which all wise and good men ought to suspect, as less agreeing with that charity, which overcomes all the sins and all the evils of the world, and sits down and rests in glory.

4. Do not trouble yourself by thinking how much you are afflicted, but consider how much you make of it: for reflex acts on the suffering itself can lead to nothing but to pride, or to impatience, to temptation, or apostasy. He that measures the grains and scruples of his persecution, will soon sit down and call for ease, or for a reward; will think the time long, or his burden great; will be apt to complain of his condition, or set a greater value on his person. Look not back on him that strikes thee, but upward to God that supports thee, and forward to the crown that is set before thee: and then consider, if the loss of

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c. † Ib. iii. 9.

thy estate hath taught thee to despise the world; whether thy poor fortune hath made thee poor in spirit; and if thy uneasy prison sets thy soul at liberty, and knocks off the fetters of a worse captivity. For then the rod of suffering turns into crowns and sceptres, when every suffering is a precept, and every change of condition produces a holy resolution, and the state of sorrows makes the resolution actual and habitual, permanent and persevering. For as the silk-worm eateth itself out of a seed to become a little worm; and there feeding on the leaves of mulberries, it grows till its coat be off, and then works itself into a house of silk; then casting its pearly seeds for the young to breed, it leaveth its silk for man, and dieth all white and winged in the shape of a flying creature; so is the progress of souls. When they are regenerate by baptism, and have cast off their first stains and the skin of worldly vanities, by feeding on the leaves of Scriptures, and the fruits of the vine, and the joys of the sacrament, they encircle themselves in the rich garments of holy and virtuous habits; then, by leaving their blood, which is the church's seed, to raise up a new generation to God, they leave a blessed memory, and fair example, and are themselves turned into angels, whose felicity is to do the will of God, as their employment was in this world to suffer it. *Fiat voluntas tua* is our daily prayer, and that is of a passive signification; 'Thy will be done' on us: and if from thence also we translate it into an active sense, and by suffering evils increase in our aptnesses to do well, we have done the work of Christians, and shall receive the rewards of martyrs.

5. Let our suffering be entertained by a direct election, not by collateral aids and fantastic assistances. It is a good refreshment to a weak spirit to suffer in good company: and so Phocion encouraged a timorous Greek, condemned to die; and he bid him be confident, because that he was to die with Phocion: and when forty martyrs in Cappadocia suffered, and that a soldier, standing by, came and supplied the place of the one apostate, who fell from his crown, being overcome with pain, it added warmth to the frozen confessors, and turned them into consummate martyrs. But if martyrdom were but a fantastic thing, or relied on vain accidents and irregular chances, it were then very necessary to be assisted by images of things, and any

thing less than the proper instruments of religion: but since it is the greatest action of the religion, and relies on the most excellent promises, and its formality is to be an action of love, and nothing is more firmly chosen (by an after-election at least) than an act of love; to support martyrdom, or the duty of sufferings, by false arches and exterior circumstances, is to build a tower on the beams of the sun, or to set up a wooden ladder to climb up to heaven; the soul cannot attain so huge and unimaginable felicities by chance and instruments of fancy. And let no man hope to glorify God and go to heaven by a life of sufferings, unless he first begin in the love of God, and from thence derive his choice, his patience, and confidence, in the causes of virtue and religion, like beams, and warmth, and influence, from the body of the sun. Some there are that fall under the burden, when they are pressed hard, because they use not the proper instruments in fortifying the will in patience and resignation, but endeavor to lighten the burden in imagination; and when these temporary supporters fail, the building that relies on them, rushes into coldness, recidivation, and lukewarmness: and, among all instances, that of the main question of the text is of greatest power to abuse imprudent and less severe persons.

> Nullos esse Deos, inane cœlum,
> Affirmat Selius; probatque, quod se
> Factum, dum negat hoc, videt beatum.*

When men choose a good cause on confidence that an ill one cannot thrive, that is, not for the love of virtue or duty to God, but for profit and secular interests, they are easily lost, when they see the wickedness of the enemy to swell up by impunity and success to a greater evil: for they have not learned to distinguish a great growing sin from a thriving and prosperous fortune.

> Ulla si juris tibi pejerati
> Pœna, Barine, nocuisset unquam;
> Dente si nigro fieres, vel uno
> Turpior ungui;
> Crederem.†

* Martial, iv. 21. † Hor. ii. 8. 1.

They that believe and choose because of idle fears and unreasonable fancies, or by mistaking the accounts of a man for the measures of God, or dare not commit treason for fear of being blasted; may come to be tempted when they see a sinner thrive, and are scandalised all the way if they die before him; or they may come to receive some accidental hardnesses; and every thing in the world may spoil such persons, and blast their resolutions. Take in all the aids you can, and if the fancy of the standers-by, or the hearing of a cock crow, can add any collateral aids to thy weakness, refuse it not: but let thy state of sufferings begin with choice, and be confirmed with knowlege, and rely on love, and the aids of God, and the expectations of heaven, and the present sense of duty; and then the action will be as glorious in the event, as it is prudent in the enterprise, and religious in the prosecution.

6. Lastly, when God hath brought thee into Christ's school, and entered thee into a state of sufferings, remember the advantages of that state: consider how unsavory the things of the world appear to thee, when thou art under the arrest of death; remember with what comforts the Spirit of God assists thy spirit; set down in thy heart all those intercourses, which happen between God and thy own soul, the sweetnesses of religion, the vanity of sin's appearances, thy newly-entertained resolutions, thy longings after heaven, and all the things of God. And if God finishes thy persecution with death, proceed in them: if he restores thee to the light of the world, and a temporal refreshment, change but the scene of sufferings in an active life, and converse with God on the same principles on which, in thy state of sufferings, thou didst build all the parts of duty. If God restores thee to thy estate, be not less in love with heaven, nor more in love with the world; let thy spirit be now as humble as before it was broken; and, to whatsoever degree of sobriety or austerity thy suffering condition did enforce thee, if it may be turned into virtue, when God restores thee (because then it was necessary thou shouldest entertain it by an after-choice), do it now also by a pre-election; that thou mayest say with David, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for thereby I have learned thy commandments.' And Paphnutius did not do his soul more advantage, when he lost

his right eye, and suffered his left knee to be cut off for Christianity and the cause of God, than that, in the days of Constantine and the church's peace, he lived not in the toleration, but in the active piety of a martyr's condition; not now a confessor of the faith only, but of the charity of a Christian. We may every one live to have need of these rules; and I do not at all think it safe to pray against it, but to be armed for it: and to whatsoever degree of sufferings God shall call us, we see what advantages God intends for us, and what advantages we ourselves may make of it. I now proceed to make use of all the former discourse, by removing it a little farther even into its utmost spiritual sense; which the Apostle does in the last words of the text; 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?'

1. These words are taken out of the Proverbs,* according to the translation of the LXX. 'If the righteous scarcely be safe:' where the word μόλις implies that he is safe, but by intermedial difficulties: and σώζεται, he is safe in the midst of his persecutions; they may disturb his rest, and discompose his fancy, but they are like the fiery chariot to Elias; he is encircled with fire, and rare circumstances, and strange usages, but is carried up to heaven in a robe of flames. And so was Noah safe when the flood came; and was the great type and instance too of the verification of this proposition; he was ὁ δίκαιος and δικαιοσύνης κήρυξ, he was put into a strange condition, perpetually wandering, shut up in a prison of wood, living on faith, having never had the experience of being safe in floods. And so have I often seen young and unskilful persons sitting in a little boat, when every little wave sporting about the sides of the vessel, and every motion and dancing of the barge, seemed a danger, and made them cling fast on their fellows; and yet all the while they were as safe as if they sat under a tree, while a gentle wind shook the leaves into a refreshment and a cooling shade: and the unskilful, inexperienced Christian shrieks out, whenever his vessel shakes, thinking it always a danger, that the watery pavement is not stable and resident, like a rock; and yet all his danger is in himself, none

* chap. xi. 31.

at all from without: for he is indeed moving on the waters, but fastened to a rock; faith is his foundation, and hope is his anchor, and death is his harbor, and Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country; and all the evils of poverty or affronts, of tribunals and evil judges, of fears and sadder apprehensions, are but like the loud wind blowing from the right point, they make a noise, and drive faster to the harbor; and if we do not leave the ship, and leap into the sea; quit the interests of religion, and run to the securities of the world; cut our cables, and dissolve our hopes; grow impatient, and hug a wave, and die in its embraces; we are as safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm when we are befriended with the world.

2. But μόλις may also signify *raro;* 'If the righteous is seldom safe:' which implies that sometimes he is, even in a temporal sense. God sometimes sends halcyon days to his church; and when he promised 'kings and queens to be their nurses,' he intended it for a blessing; and yet this blessing does oftentimes so ill succeed, that it is the greater blessing of the two, not to give us that blessing too freely. But μόλις, this is scarcely done; and yet sometimes it is, and God sometimes refreshes languishing piety with such arguments as comply with our infirmities: and though it be a shame to us to need such allectives and infant gaudes, such which the heathen world and the first rudiments of the Israelites did need; God, who pities us, and will be wanting in nothing to us, as he corroborates our willing spirits with proper entertainments, so also he supports our weak flesh, and not only cheers an afflicted soul with beams of light, and antepasts and earnests of glory, but is kind also to our man of flesh and weakness; and to this purpose he sends thunderbolts from heaven on evil men, dividing their tongues, infatuating their counsels, cursing their posterity, and ruining their families,

———ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
Ἢ τῶν γε στρατὸν εὐρὺν ἀπώλεσεν, ἢ ὅγε τεῖχος,
Ἢ νέας ἐν πόντῳ Κρονίδης ἀποτίνυται αὐτῶν.*

"Sometimes God destroys their armies, or their strong holds,

* Hesiod, Ἔργ. 243. Gaisford.

sometimes breaks their ships." But this happens either for the weakness of some of his servants, and their too great aptness to be offended at a prosperous iniquity, or when he will not suffer the evil to grow too great, or for some end of his providence; and yet, if this should be very often, or last long, God knows the danger, and we should feel the inconvenience. Of all the types of Christ, only Joshua and Solomon were noted to be generally prosperous: and yet the fortune of the first was to be in perpetual war and danger; but the other was as himself could wish it, rich, and peaceful, and powerful, and healthful, and learned, and beloved, and strong, and amorous, and voluptuous, and so he fell; and though his fall was, yet his recovery was not, on record.

And yet the worst of evils that happen to the godly, is better, temporally better, than the greatest external felicity of the wicked: that in all senses the question may be considerable and argumentative, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear?' If it be hard with good men, with the evil it shall be far worse. But see the difference. The godly man is timorous, and yet safe; tossed by the seas, and yet safe at anchor; impaired by evil accidents, and righted by divine comforts; made sad with a black cloud, and refreshed with a more gentle influence; abused by the world, and yet a heir of heaven; hated by men, and beloved by God; loses one house, and gets a hundred; he quits a convenient lodging-room, and purchases a glorious country; is forsaken by his friends, but never by a good conscience; he fares hardly, and sleeps sweetly; he flies from his enemies, but hath no distracting fears; he is full of thought, but of no amazement; it is his business to be troubled, and his portion to be comforted; he hath nothing to afflict him, but the loss of that which might be his danger, but can never be his good; and in the recompense of this he hath God for his father, Christ for his captain, the Holy Ghost for his supporter; so that he shall have all the good which God can give him, and of all that good he hath the holy Trinity for an earnest and a gage for his maintenance at the present, and his portion to all eternity. But, though Paul and Silas sang psalms in prison, and under the hangman's whips, and in an earthquake; yet neither the jailer nor the perse-

cuting magistrates could do so. For the prosperity of the wicked is like a winter's sun, or the joy of a condemned drunkard; it is a forgetfulness of his present danger, and his future sorrows, nothing but imaginary arts of inadvertency: he sits in the gates of the city, and judges others, and is condemned himself; he is honored by the passers-by, and is thought happy, but he sighs deeply; 'he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them;' he commands an army, and is himself a slave to his passions; he sleeps because he needs it, and starts from his uneasy pillows which his thoughtful head hath discomposed; when he is waking, he dreams of greatness; when he sleeps, he dreams of spectres and illusions: he spoils a poor man of his lamb, and himself of his innocence and peace; and in every unjust purchase, himself is the greatest loser.

Ὅς δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕληται, ἀναιδείῃφι πιθήσας,
*Καί τε σμικρὸν ἐὸν, τό γ' ἐπάχνωσεν φίλον ἦτορ.**

For, just on his oppression or injustice, he is turned a devil, and God's enemy, a wolf to his brother, a greedy admirer of the baits of fishes, and the bread of dogs; he is unsafe by reason of his sin: for he hath against him the displeasure of God, the justice of the laws, the shame of the sin, the revenge of the injured person; and God and men, the laws of nations and private societies, stand on their defence against this man: he is unsafe in his rest, amazed in his danger, troubled in his labors, weary in his change, esteemed a base man, disgraced and scorned, feared and hated, flattered and derided, watched and suspected, and, it may be, dies in the middle of his purchase, and at the end is a fool, and leaves a curse to his posterity.

Τοῦδέ τ' ἀμαυροτέρῃ γενεῇ μετόπισθε λέλειπται·†

"He leaves a generation of blacker children behind him;" so the poet describes the cursedness of their posterity; and their memory sits down to eternal ages in dishonor. And by this time let them cast up their accounts, and see if, of all their violent purchases, they carry any thing with them to the grave but sin, and a guilty conscience, and a polluted soul; the anger

* Hesiod, Ἔργ. 357. † Ib. Ἔργ. 282.

of God, and the shame of men. And what help shall all those persons give to thee in thy flames, who divided and scattered that estate, for which thou diedst for ever?

> Audire est operæ pretium, procedere recte
> Qui mœchis non vultis, ut omni parte laborent;
> Utque illis multo corrupta dolore voluptas,
> Atque hæc rara cadat, dura inter sæpe pericla.*

And let but a sober answerer tell me, if any thing in the world be more distant either from goodness or happiness, than to scatter the plague of an accursed soul on our dearest children; to make a universal curse; to be the fountain of a mischief; to be such a person whom our children and nephews shall hate, and despise, and curse, when they groan under the burden of that plague which their fathers' sins brought on the family. If there were no other account to be given, it were highly enough to verify the intent of my text; 'If the righteous scarcely be saved,' or escape God's angry stroke, the wicked must needs be infinitely more miserable.

> Νῦν δὴ ἐγὼ μήτ' αὐτὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιος
> Εἴην, μήτ' ἐμὸς υἱὸς, ἐπεὶ κακὸν ἄνδρα δίκαιον
> Ἔμμεναι————.†

"Neither I nor my son," said the oldest of the Greek poets, "would be virtuous, if to be a just person were all one as to be miserable." No, not only in the end of affairs, and at sunset, but all the day long, the godly man is happy, and the ungodly and the sinner are very miserable.

> Pellitur a populo victus Cato; tristior ille est
> Qui vicit, fascesque pudet rapuisse Catoni:
> Namque hoc dedecus est populi, morumque ruina.
> Non homo pulsus erat; sed in uno victa potestas
> Romanumque decus.

And there needs no other argument to be added but this one great testimony, that though the godly are afflicted and persecuted, yet even they are blessed, and the persecutors are the most unsafe. They are essentially happy whom affliction can-

* Hor. Sat. i. 2. 37. † Hes. Ἔργ. 268. Gaisf. p. 22.

not make miserable, but turns unto their advantages;* and that is the state of the godly. And they are most intolerably accursed who have no portions in the blessings of eternity, and yet cannot have comfort in the present purchases of their sin; to whom even their sunshine brings a drought, and their fairest is their foulest weather: and that is the portion of the sinner and the ungodly. The godly are not made unhappy by their sorrows; and the wicked are such, whom prosperity itself cannot make fortunate.

3. And yet after all this, it is but *μόλις σώζεται*, not *μόλις σωθήσεται*, he 'escapes but hardly' here; it will be well enough with him hereafter. Isaac digged three wells. The first was called 'contention;' for he drank the waters of strife, and digged the well with his sword. The second well was not altogether so hard a purchase: he got it with some trouble; but that being over, he had some room, and his fortune swelled, and he called his well 'enlargement.' But his third he called 'abundance;' and then he dipped his foot in oil, and drank freely as out of a river. Every good man first 'sows in tears;' he first drinks of the bottle of his own tears, sorrow and trouble, labor and disquiet, strivings and temptations: but if they pass through a torrent, and virtue becomes easy and habitual, they find their hearts enlarged and made sprightly by the visitations of God, and refreshment of his Spirit; and then their hearts are enlarged, they know how to gather the down and softnesses from the sharpest thistles.

> Τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
> Ἀθάνατοι· μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν,
> Καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον· ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηαι,
> Ῥηϊδίη δ' ἤπειτα πέλει, χαλεπὴ περ ἐοῦσα.†

At first we cannot serve God but by passions and doing violence to all our wilder inclinations, and suffering the violence of tyrants and unjust persons: the second days of virtue are pleasant and easy in the midst of all the appendant labors. But when the Christian's last pit is digged, when he is descended

* Quis curam neget esse te Deorum,
Propter quem fuit innocens ruina? Mart. i. 83.

† Hesiod, Ἔργ. 287. Gaisford, p. 23.

to his grave, and hath finished his state of sorrows and suffering; then God opens the river of abundance, the rivers of life and never-ceasing felicities. And this is that which God promised to his people; 'I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.'* So much as moments are exceeded by eternity, and the sighing of a man by the joys of an angel, and a salutary frown by the light of God's countenance, a few groans by the infinite and eternal hallelujahs; so much are the sorrows of the godly to be undervalued in respect of what is deposited for them in the treasures of eternity. Their sorrows can die, but so cannot their joys. And if the blessed martyrs and confessors were asked concerning their past sufferings and their present rest, and the joys of their certain expectation, you should hear them glory in nothing but in the mercies of God, and 'in the cross of the Lord Jesus.' Every chain is a ray of light, and every prison is a palace, and every loss is the purchase of a kingdom, and every affront in the cause of God is an eternal honor, and every day of sorrow is a thousand years of comfort, multiplied with a never-ceasing numeration; days without nights, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening: and they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away. Well might David say, *Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris*, 'The cords' of my tent, my ropes, and the sorrow of my pilgrimage, 'fell to me in a good ground, and I have a goodly heritage.' And when persecution hews a man down from a high fortune to an even one, or from thence to the face of the earth, or from thence to the grave; a good man is but preparing for a crown, and the tyrant does but first knock off the fetters of the soul, the manacles of passion and desire, sensual loves and lower appetites: and if God suffers him to finish the persecution, then he can but dismantle the soul's prison, and let the soul forth to fly to the mountains of rest: and all the intermedial evils are but like the Persian punishments; the executioner tore off their hairs,

* Isa. liv. 8.

and rent their silken mantles, and discomposed their curious dressings, and lightly touched the skin; yet the offender cried out with most bitter exclamations, while his fault was expiated with a ceremony and without blood. So does God to his servants; he rends their upper garments, and strips them of their unnecessary wealth, and ties them to physic and salutary discipline; and they cry out under usages which have nothing but the outward sense and opinion of evil, not the real substance. But if we would take the measures of images, we must not take the height of the base, but the proportion of the members; nor yet measure the estates of men by their big-looking supporter, or the circumstance of an exterior advantage, but by its proper commensuration in itself, as it stands in its order to eternity; and then the godly man that suffers sorrow and persecution, ought to be relieved by us, but needs not be pitied in the sum of affairs. But since the two estates of the world are measured by time and by eternity, and divided by joy and sorrow, and no man shall have his portion of joys in both durations; the state of those men is insupportably miserable, who are fatted for slaughter, and are crowned like beasts for sacrifice; who are feared and fear, who cannot enjoy their purchases but by communications with others, and themselves have the least share, but themselves are alone in the misery and the saddest dangers, and they possess the whole portion of sorrows; to whom their prosperity gives but occasions to evil counsels, and strength to do mischief, or to nourish a serpent, or oppress a neighbor, or to nurse a lust, to increase folly, and treasure up calamity. And did ever any man see, or story tell, that any tyrant-prince kissed his rods and axes, his sword of justice, and his imperial ensigns of power? they shine like a taper to all things but itself. But we read of many martyrs who kissed their chains, and hugged their stakes, and saluted their hangman with great endearments; and yet, abating the incursions of their seldom sins, these are their greatest evils; and such they are with which a wise and a good man may be in love. And till the sinners and ungodly men can be so with their deep groans and broken sleeps, with the wrath of God and their portions of eternity; till they can rejoice in death, and long for a resurrection, and with delight and a greedy hope can think of the day

of judgment; we must conclude that their glass gems and finest pageantry, their splendid outsides and great powers of evil, cannot make amends for that estate of misery, which is their portion with a certainty as great as is the truth of God, and all the articles of the Christian creed. Miserable men are they, who cannot be blessed unless there be no day of judgment; who must perish, unless the word of God should fail. If that be all their hopes, then we may with a sad spirit and a soul of pity inquire into the question of the text, 'Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?' Even there where God's face shall never shine, where there shall be fire and no light, where there shall be no angels but what are many thousand years turned into devils, where no good man shall ever dwell, and from whence the evil and the accursed shall never be dismissed. 'O my God, let my soul never come into their counsels, nor lie down in their sorrows.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON VI.

ROMANS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 4.

PART I.

FROM the beginning of time till now, all effluxes which have come from God, have been nothing but emanations of his goodness, clothed in variety of circumstances. He made man with no other design than that man should be happy, and by receiving derivations from his fountain of mercy, might reflect glory to him. This topic enlarged on, and the mercy of God traced through all his dispensations to mankind. The sense and paraphrase of the text is this; *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness*, &c.? *Thou dost not know*, that is, thou considerest not, that it is for thy farther benefit God thus acts towards thee; the *goodness of God* is not a design to serve his own ends on thee, but thine on him: it *leadeth thee to repentance.*

The several parts of God's method in curing mankind, namely, χρηστότης, ἀνοχὴ, and μακροθυμία, laid down in order, and explained.

1. The first great instrument that God uses to bring us to him, is χρηστότης, *profit* or *benefit*. And this must needs be; for those instruments whereby we have a being, are so great mercies, that besides giving us the capacity of other mercies, they advance us in the greatest instances of promotion in the world. Our creation from nothing to something; our creation in a rank little lower than that of the angels, with a capacity for eternal blessedness, dilated on.

God's mercies in the production of us, and the sustaining

still farther displayed. But when we degenerated and made ourselves by sin more base and ignoble than all other creatures; even then, from thenceforward, God began his work of *leading us to repentance* by the *riches of his goodness.*

God's blessings enumerated, in his causing us to be born of Christian parents under so excellent a law, which extends not to fallen angels; excellency of this law, and all it does for us, through the sacrifice and intercession of Christ, &c. enlarged on. And that we may know what he intercedes for, he hath sent ambassadors to declare the purport of his design. And therefore let us here consider, if it be not infinite impiety to *despise the riches of such goodness*, &c.

After the enumeration of these prodigies of mercy and loving-kindness, much need not be said on the particular mercies of God to men: but the poorest person, besides the foregoing graces and blessings, hath enough, in the accidents of every day, to shame him into repentance. These divine mercies enumerated.

If with these good things we remain obdurate, a time will come, when our stony heart will be upbraided to us; that we made God to sow his seed on the sand: this topic enlarged on and illustrated.

However, that we may see the greatness of God's goodness, he seldom leaves us thus: for if he sees that his mercies do not allure us and make us thankful, he continues his mercies still to us in a different guise: he is merciful in punishing us, that we may be led to repentance by such instruments as will scare us from sin: and here begins the second part of God's method, intimated in the word *forbearance.*

2. Ἀνοχή, or *forbearance.* God begins his cure by caustics, by incisions and instruments of vexation, to try if the disease that will not yield to the allectives of cordials, frictions, and baths, may be forced out by deleteries, scarifications, and more salutary, but less pleasing physic. The word ἀνοχὴ signifies

laxamentum or *inducias*, that is, a suspension of God's temporal judgments, that is, a reprieve, or else an *ease and remission of them;* in both of which, though in judgment, God remembers mercy: yet we are under discipline, and at least are shown the rod.

This subject considered first in general. The riches of the divine goodness are manifest in beginning this new method of cure by severity, though we may think the way of blessings and prosperity the best: this topic enlarged on.

Repentance is a duty that best complies with affliction; this shown. And because God knows this well, and loves us better than we do ourselves, he therefore sends on us the scrolls of vengeance, *the hand-writing on the wall*, to denounce judgment: not that he always strikes as soon as he sends out his warrants: instances of Noah and Jonas: these were reprieves and deferrings of the stroke.

But God sometimes strikes once, and then forbears: instances given: these are the louder calls to repentance, but still instances of forbearance.

Indeed, many times this forbearance makes men impudent: instance of Pharaoh commented on. Cautions to us, not to let his forbearance have the effect of hardening our hearts, &c.

Exhortations, to remember the resolutions we may have made in any great danger or calamity: to take the account of our lives, and read over the lessons which God has given us; the dangers we may have escaped; the blessings we may have received; the warnings that may have been given to us, &c. Conclusion.

PART II.

Third consideration, *μακροθυμία*, *long-suffering*. In this one word are contained all the treasures of the divine goodness: here is the length and extension of his mercy. And here also

is much of the divine justice: for though God forbears to destroy us, he does not forbear to punish us: and that he should thus bring us to himself, whether we will or not, by such gracious violences and merciful judgments, which he uses as his last remedies, shows not only a mighty mercy, but an almighty power. So hard is it to make us leave our follies, that were not the mercies of God effective with mighty power, every sinner would perish irrevocably. But this is the fiery trial, the last purgatory fire which God uses to purify the dross. When we are under this state of cure, we are so near to destruction, that the same instrument used to cure us, is also prepared to destroy us, &c. It is sad that we put God to such extremities; and it too often happens, as in long diseases, when the remedies which physicians use for the last seldom prevail. If, when our vices were young and our strength more active, &c. we suffered sin to prevail on us, in the midst of all those remedies which God applied to the beginning of our disease; much more desperate indeed is our recovery, when the disease is stronger, and our faculties more weak.

Yet though this be sad, and we should strive against coming to this extremity, if it be on us, we must do as well as we can: but then we are to look on it as a design of God's last mercy, beyond which, if we protract our repentance, our condition is desperately miserable; the whole state of which mercy we understand by the parable of the king reckoning with his servants that were in arrears to him: this explained. A sentence may be sad, but acted with a gentle instrument; and it is well for those who are condemned to pay the scores of their sins with a load of judgments, that this will not adhere to them through eternity. When God slew the 23,000 Assyrians for their fornication, that was a final justice on their persons, and consigned them to a sad eternity; for beyond such an affliction there was no remedy: but when God sent lions to the Assyrian inhabitants of Samaria, and drove them to inquire after the

manner of the God in the land, &c. that was a judgment and a mercy too: the 'long forbearance of God,' who destroyed not all, led 'the rest' to repentance.

1. First observation: that when things come to this pass, and God is forced to the last remedies of judgment, this long-sufferance will little or nothing concern particular persons, but nations and communities of men: for if any are smitten with judgment, if God takes his hands off again, and so opens a way for their repentance by prolonging their time, that comes under the second part of God's method, the ἀνοχὴ, or *forbearance:* but if he smites a single person with a final judgment, that is a *long-suffering*, not of him, but towards others; and God hath destroyed one to make others repent, the former's time being expired, and the date of his possibility determined: this explained.

2. And this must be observed, that we may truly estimate the acts of the divine justice and mercy. For all the world being but one intire argument of the divine mercy, we are apt to abuse it to vain confidence and presumption; first, mistaking the end, as if it would be indulgent to our sin: this explained: and also mistaking the economy of it, and the manner of its ministration.

3. For if God suffers men to go on in sins, and punishes them not, it is not a mercy or a forbearance; it is a hardening of them, a consigning them to ruin and reprobation: and they themselves give the best argument to prove it; for they every day multiply their iniquity, and every day grow more an enemy to God.

A prosperous iniquity is the most unprosperous condition in the world: this illustrated. What wisdom, philosophy, experience, revelation, promises and blessings cannot do, a mighty fear can; and therefore God's mercy prevails, even when nothing can be discerned but his judgments.

God's mercy is often given to us in parts, and to certain pur-

poses. Sometimes he only so forgives us, that he does not cut us off in the sin, but yet lays on a heavy load of judgment: instance of the Jewish captivity. Sometimes he makes a judgment less, and strikes more gently: instance of David (2 Sam. xii. 13.): sometimes he puts the evil off to a farther day, as in the case of Ahab and Hezekiah. And thus, when we have committed a heinous sin against God, we are not sure to be wholly forgiven on our repentance; but are happy if he so far forgive us as to spare us the pains of eternity: instance of David.

For if we sin and ask God forgiveness, and then are quiet, we feel so little inconvenience in the trade, that we are easily tempted to make a trade of it indeed: this topic enlarged on. No man that hath sinned can be restored to perfect innocence and perfect peace; so that he must watch and strive always against his sin; must mourn for it, pray for pardon, and always find cause to hate it, by knowing that he is for ever in danger on account of it, even though God may have pardoned him.

Sometimes we find a severer judgment happening on a people; and yet his mercy generally prevails over his justice. The result is, that God's mercies are not, and ought not to be instruments of confidence to sin, because the very purpose of his mercy is to the contrary; and the very manner of his economy is such, that his mercy goes along in conjunction with his judgments: this topic enlarged on.

The use of all the premises is that which St. Paul expresses in the text, that *we do not despise all this*; and he only despises not, who serves the end of God in all these designs of mercy, that is, who repents of his sins. But there are many despisers: these described, and their folly pointed out.

SERMON VI.

THE MERCY OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS; OR, GOD'S METHOD IN CURING SINNERS.

ROMANS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 4.

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

PART I.

FROM the beginning of time till now, all effluxes which have come from God, have been nothing but emanations of his goodness, clothed in variety of circumstances. He made man with no other design than that man should be happy, and by receiving derivations from his fountain of mercy, might reflect glory to him. And therefore, God making man for his own glory, made also a paradise for man's use; and did him good, to invite him to do himself a greater: for God gave forth demonstrations of his power by instances of mercy; and he who might have made ten thousand worlds of wonder and prodigy, and created man with faculties able only to stare on and admire those miracles of mightiness, did choose to instance his power in the effusions of mercy, that, at the same instant, he might represent himself desirable and adorable, in all the capacities of amiability; namely, as excellent in himself, and profitable to us. For as the sun sends forth a benign and gentle influence on the seed of plants, that it may invite forth the active and plastic power from its recess and secrecy, that by rising into

the tallness and dimensions of a tree, it may still receive a greater and more refreshing influence from its foster-father, the prince of all the bodies of light; and in all these emanations, the sun itself receives no advantage, but the honor of doing benefits: so doth the Almighty Father of all the creatures; he at first sends forth his blessings on us, that we, by using them aright, should make ourselves capable of greater; while the giving glory to God, and doing homage to him, are nothing for his advantage, but only for ours; our duties towards him being like vapors ascending from the earth, not at all to refresh the region of the clouds, but to return back in a fruitful and refreshing shower; and God created us, not that we can increase his felicity, but that he might have a subject receptive of felicity from him. Thus he causes us to be born, that we may be capable of his blessings; he causes us to be baptised, that we may have a title to the glorious promises evangelical; he gives us his Son, that we may be rescued from hell. And when we constrain him to use harsh courses towards us, it is also in mercy: he smites us, to cure a disease; he sends us sickness, to procure our health. And as if God were all mercy, he is merciful in his first design, in all his instruments, in the way, and in the end of the journey; and does not only show the riches of his goodness to them that do well, but to all men that they may do well: he is good, to make us good; he does us benefits, to make us happy. And if we, by despising such gracious rays of light and heat, stop their progress, and interrupt their design, the loss is not God's, but ours; we shall be the miserable and accursed people. This is the sense and paraphrase of my text: 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness,' &c.? 'Thou dost not know,' that is, thou considerest not, that it is for farther benefit that God does thee this: the 'goodness of God' is not a design to serve his own ends on thee, but thine on him: 'the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.'

Here then is God's method of curing mankind, χρηστότης, ἀνοχή, μακροθυμία. First, 'goodness,' or inviting us to him by sugared words, by the placid arguments of temporal favor, and the propositions of excellent promises. Secondly, ἀνοχή, at the same time. Although God is provoked every day, yet

he does ἀνέχειν, he "tolerates" our stubbornness, he forbears to punish; and when he does begin to strike, takes his hand off, and gives us truce and respite. For so ἀνόχη signifies *laxamentum*, and *inducias* too. Thirdly, μακροθυμία, still "a long putting off" and deferring his final destroying anger, by using all means to force us to repentance; and this especially by the way of judgments; these being the last reserves of the divine mercy, and however we esteem it, is the greatest instance of the divine long-suffering that is in the world. After these instruments, we may consider the end, the strand on which these land us, the purpose of this variety, of these labors and admirable arts, with which God so studies and contrives the happiness and salvation of man: it is only that man may be brought by these means unto repentance, and by repentance may be brought to eternal life. This is "the treasure of the divine goodness," the great and admirable efflux of the eternal beneficence, the πλοῦτος χρηστότητος, 'the riches of his goodness,' which whosoever despises, despises himself and the great interest of his own felicity; he shall die in his impenitence, and perish in his folly.

1. The first great instrument that God chooses to bring us to him, is χρηστότης, "profit," or benefit; and this must needs be first; for those instruments whereby we have a being, are so great mercies, that besides that they are such which give us the capacities of all other mercies, they are the advances of us in the greatest instances of promotion in the world. For from nothing to something is an infinite space; and a man must have a measure of infinite passed on him, before he can perceive himself to be either happy or miserable: he is not able to give God thanks for one blessing, until he hath received many. But then God intends we should enter on his service at the beginning of our days, because even then he is beforehand with us, and hath already given us great instances of his goodness. What a prodigy of favor is it to us, that he hath passed by so many forms of his creatures, and hath not set us down in the rank of any of them, till we came to be *paulo minores angelis*, 'a little lower than the angels!' and yet from the meanest of them God can perfect his own praise. The deeps and the snows, the hail and the rain, the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea, they can and do glorify God, and give him

praise in their capacity; and yet he gave them no speech, no reason, no immortal spirit, or capacity of eternal blessedness; but he hath distinguished us from them by the absolute issues of his predestination, and hath given us a lasting and eternal spirit, excellent organs of perception, and wonderful instruments of expression, that we may join in concert with the morning-star, and bear a part in the chorus with the angels of light, to sing hallelujah to the great Father of men and angels.

But was it not a huge chain of mercies, that we were not strangled in the regions of our own natural impurities, but were sustained by the breath of God from perishing in the womb, where God formed us *in secreto terræ*, told our bones, and kept the order of nature, and the miracles of creation; and we lived on that which, in the next minute after we were born, would strangle us if it were not removed? but then God took care of us, and his hands of providence clothed us and fed us. But why do I reckon the mercies of production, which in every minute of our being are alike and continued, and are miracles in all senses, but that they are common and usual? I only desire you to remember, that God made all the works of his hands to serve him. And, indeed, this mercy of creating us such as we are, was not 'to lead us to repentance,' but was a design of innocence: he intended we should serve him as the sun and the moon do, as fire and water do; never to prevaricate the laws he fixed to us, that we might have needed no repentance. But since we did degenerate, and being by God made better and more noble creatures than all the inhabitants of the air, the water, and the earth besides,—we made ourselves baser and more ignoble than any: for no dog, crocodile, or swine, was ever God's enemy, as we made ourselves; yet then from thenceforward God began his work of 'leading us to repentance' by the 'riches of his goodness.' He caused us to be born of Christian parents, under whom we were taught the mysteriousness of its goodness and designs for the redemption of man; and by the design of which religion, repentance was taught to mankind, and an excellent law given for distinction of good and evil. And this is a blessing, which though possibly we do not often put into our eucharistical litanies to give

God thanks for; yet if we sadly consider what had become of us, if we had been born under the dominion of a Turkish lord, or in America, where no Christians do inhabit, where they worship the devil, where witches are their priests, their prophets, their physicians, and their oracles; can we choose but apprehend a visible notorious necessity of perishing in those sins, which we then should not have understood by the glass of a divine law to have declined, nor by a revelation have been taught to repent of? But since the best of men does, in the midst of all the great advantages of laws, and examples, and promises, and threatenings, do many things he ought to be ashamed of, and needs to repent of; we can understand the riches of the divine goodness best, by considering, that the very design of our birth and education in the Christian religion is, that we may recover of and cure our follies by the antidote of repentance, which is preached to us as a doctrine, and propounded as a favor; which was put into a law, and purchased for us by a great expense; which God does not more command to us as a duty, than he gives us as a blessing. For now that we shall not perish for our first follies, but be admitted to new conditions, to be repaired by second thoughts, to have our infirmities excused, and our sins forgiven, our habits lessened, and our malice cured, after we were wounded, and sick, and dead, and buried, and in the possession of the devil; this was such a blessing, so great riches of the divine goodness, that it was taught to no religion but the Christian, revealed by no lawgiver but Christ, so it was a favor greater than ever God gave to the angels and devils; for although God was rich in the effusion of his goodness towards them, yet they were not admitted to the condition of second thoughts; Christ never shed one drop of blood for them; 'his goodness did not lead them to repentance;' but to us it was, that he made this largess of his goodness; to us, to whom he made himself a brother, and sucked the paps of our mother; he paid the scores of our sin, and shame, and death, only that we might be admitted to repent, and that this repentance might be effectual to the great purposes of felicity and salvation. And if we could consider this sadly, it might make us better to understand our madness and folly in refusing to repent;—this is, to be sorrowful,—and

to leave all our sins,—and to make amends by a holy life. For that we might be admitted and suffered to do so, God was fain to pour forth all the riches of his goodness: it cost our dearest Lord the price of his dearest blood, many a thousand groans, millions of prayers and sighs, and at this instant he is praying for our repentance; nay, he hath prayed for our repentance these sixteen hundred years incessantly, night and day, and shall do so till doomsday; 'He sits at the right hand of God making intercession for us.' And that we may know what he prays for, he hath sent us ambassadors to declare the purpose of all his design: for St. Paul saith, 'We are ambassadors for Christ, as though he did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.' The purpose of our embassy and ministry is a prosecution of the mercies of God, and the work of redemption, and the intercession and mediation of Christ: it is the work of atonement and reconciliation that God designed, and Christ died for, and still prays for, and we preach for, and you all must labor for.

And therefore here consider, if it be not infinite impiety to 'despise the riches of such a goodness,' which at so great a charge, with such infinite labor and deep mysterious arts, invites us to repentance; that is, to such a thing as could not be granted to us unless Christ should die to purchase it; such a glorious favor, that is the issue of Christ's prayers in heaven, and of all his labors, his sorrows, and his sufferings on earth. If we refuse to repent now, we do not so much refuse to do our own duty, as to accept of a reward. It is the greatest and the dearest blessing that ever God gave to men, that they may repent: and therefore, to deny it or delay it, is to refuse health, brought us by the skill and industry of the physician; it is to refuse liberty indulged to us by our gracious Lord. And certainly we had reason to take it very ill, if, at a great expense, we should purchase a pardon for a servant, and he, out of a peevish pride or negligence, shall refuse it; the scorn pays itself, the folly is its own scourge, and sits down in an inglorious ruin.

After the enumeration of these glories, these prodigies of mercies and loving-kindnesses, of Christ's dying for us, and interceding for us, and merely that we may repent and be

saved; I shall less need to instance those other particularities whereby God continues, as by so many arguments of kindness, to sweeten our natures, and make them malleable to the precepts of love and obedience, the twin daughters of holy repentance: but the poorest person amongst us, besides the blessing and graces already reckoned, hath enough about him, and the accidents of every day, to shame him into repentance. Does not God send his 'angels to keep thee in all thy ways?' are not they ministering spirits sent forth to wait on thee as thy guard? art not thou kept from drowning, from fracture of bones, from madness, from deformities, by the riches of the divine goodness? Tell the joints of thy body; dost thou want a finger? and if thou dost not understand how great a blessing that is, do but remember, how ill thou canst spare the use of it when thou hast but a thorn in it. The very privative blessings, the blessings of immunity, safeguard, and integrity, which we all enjoy, deserve a thanksgiving of a whole life. If God should send a cancer on thy face, or a wolf into thy breast, if he should spread a crust of leprosy on thy skin, what wouldest thou give to be but as now thou art? Wouldest not thou repent of thy sins on that condition? Which is the greater blessing, to be kept from them, or to be cured of them? And why therefore shall not this greater blessing lead thee to repentance? Why do we, not so aptly, promise repentance when we are sick, on the condition to be made well, and yet perpetually forget it when we are well? As if health never were a blessing, but when we have it not. Rather I fear the reason is, when we are sick we promise to repent, because then we cannot sin the sins of our former life; but in health our appetites return to their capacity, and in all the way 'we despise the riches of the divine goodness,' which preserves us from such evils, which would be full of horror and amazement, if they should happen to us.

Hath God made any of you all chapfallen? Are you affrighted with spectres and illusions of the spirits of darkness? How many earthquakes have you been in? How many days have any of you wanted bread? How many nights have you been without sleep? Are any of you distracted of your senses? And if God gives you meat and drink, health and sleep, proper

seasons of the year, entire senses and a useful understanding; what a great unworthiness is it to be unthankful to so good a God, so benign a Father, so gracious a Lord? All the evils and baseness of the world can show nothing baser and more unworthy than ingratitude: and therefore it was not unreasonably said of Aristotle, Εὐτυχία φιλόθεος, "Prosperity makes a man love God," supposing men to have so much humanity left in them, as to love him from whom they have received so many favors. And Hippocrates said, that although poor men use to murmur against God, yet rich men will be offering sacrifice to their Deity, whose beneficiaries they are. Now, since the riches of the divine goodness are so poured out on the meanest of us all, if we shall refuse to repent, (which is a condition so reasonable, that God requires it only for our sake, and that it may end in our felicity) we do ourselves despite, to be unthankful to God; that is, we become miserable, by making ourselves basely criminal. And if any man, whom God hath used to no other method but of his sweetness and the effusion of mercies, brings no other fruits but the apples of Sodom in return of all his culture and labors; God will cut off that unprofitable branch, that with Sodom it may suffer the flames of everlasting burning.

Οἶει σὺ τοὺς θανόντας, ὦ Νικήρατε,
Τρυφῆς ἀπάσης μεταλαβόντας ἐν βίῳ,
*Πεφυγέναι τὸ θεῖον ὡς λελῃθότας;**

If here we have good things, and a continual shower of blessings, to soften our stony hearts, and we shall remain obdurate against those sermons of mercy which God makes us every day, there will come a time when this shall be upbraided to us, that we had not νοῦν ἀντίτυπον, a thankful mind, but made God to sow his seed on the sand, or on the stones, without increase or restitution. It was a sad alarm which God sent to David by Nathan, to upbraid his ingratitude: 'I anointed thee king over Israel, I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, I gave thee thy master's house and wives into thy bosom, and the house of Israel and Judah; and if this had been too little, I would have given thee such and such things: wherefore hast thou despised

* Philemon Clerici, p. 360.

the name of the Lord?' But how infinitely more can God say to all of us than all this came to; he hath anointed us kings and priests in the royal priesthood of Christianity; he hath given us his Holy Spirit to be our guide, his angels to be our protectors, his creatures for our food and raiment; he hath delivered us from the hands of Satan, hath conquered death for us, hath taken the sting out, and made it harmless and medicinal, and proclaimed us heirs of heaven, coheirs with the eternal Jesus: and if, after all this, we despise the commandment of the Lord, and defer and neglect our repentance, what shame is great enough, what miseries are sharp enough, what hell painful enough, for such horrid ingratitude? St. Lewis the king having sent Ivo, bishop of Chartres, on an embassy, the bishop met a woman on the way, grave, sad, fantastic, and melancholic, with fire in one hand, and water in the other. He asked, what those symbols meant. She answered, My purpose is with fire to burn Paradise, and with my water to quench the flames of hell, that men may serve God without the incentives of hope and fear, and purely for the love of God. But this woman began at the wrong end: the love of God is not produced in us, after we have contracted evil habits, till God, with 'his fan in his hand, hath thoroughly purged the floor,' till he hath cast out all the devils, and swept the house with the instrument of hope and fear, and with the achievements and efficacy of mercies and judgments. But then, since God may truly say to us, as of old to his rebellious people, 'Am I a dry tree to the house of Israel?' that is, Do I bring them no fruit? Do they 'serve me for nought?' and he expects not our duty till first we feel his goodness; we are now infinitely inexcusable to throw away so great riches, to 'despise such a goodness.'

However, that we may see the greatness of this treasure of goodness, God seldom leaves us thus: for he sees (be it spoken to the shame of our natures, and the dishonor of our manners), he sees that his mercies do not allure us, do not make us thankful, but, as the Roman said, *Felicitate corrumpimur*, "We become worse for God's mercy," and think it will be always holiday; and are like the crystal of Arabia, hardened not by cold, but made crusty and stubborn by the warmth of the divine fire, by its refreshments and mercies: therefore, to demonstrate that God is

good indeed, he continues his mercies still to us, but in another instance; he is merciful to us in punishing us, that we may be led to repentance by such instruments which will scare us from sin; he delivers us up to the pedagogy of the divine judgments: and there begins the second part of God's method, intimated in the word ἀνοχή, or 'forbearance.' God begins his cure by caustics, by incisions and instruments of vexation, to try if the disease that will not yield to the allectives of cordials and perfumes, frictions and baths, may be forced out by deleteries, scarifications, and more salutary, but less pleasing physic.

2. Ἀνοχή, 'forbearance,' it is called in the text; which signifies *laxamentum* or *inducias:* that is, when the decrees of the divine judgments temporal are gone out, either wholly to suspend the execution of them, which is *induciæ*, or "a reprieve;" or else, when God hath struck once or twice, he takes off his hand, that is *laxamentum*, an "ease or remission" of his judgment. In both these, although 'in judgment God remembers mercy,' yet we are under discipline, we are brought into the penitential chamber; at least, we are showed the rod of God: and if, like Moses's rod, it turns us into serpents, and that we repent not, but grow more devils; yet then it turns into a rod again, and finishes up the smiting, or the first designed affliction.

But I consider it first in general. The riches of the divine goodness are manifest in beginning this new method of curing us by severity and by a rod. And, that you may not wonder that I expound this 'forbearance' to be an act of mercy punishing, I observe, that, besides that the word supposes the method changed, and it is a mercy about judgments, and their manner of execution; it is also, in the nature of the things, in the conjunction of circumstances, and the designs of God, a mercy when he threatens us or strikes us into repentance.

We think that the way of blessings and prosperous accidents is the finer way of securing our duty; and that when our heads are anointed, our cups crowned, and our tables full, the very caresses of our spirits will best of all dance before the ark, and sing perpetual anthems to the honor of our benefactor and patron, God: and we are apt to dream that God will make his saints reign here as kings in a millenary kingdom, and give

them the riches and fortunes of this world, that they may rule over men, and sing psalms to God for ever. But I remember what Xenophanes says of God,

Οὔτε δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος, οὔτε νόημα·

"God is like to men neither in shape nor in counsel;" he knows that his mercies confirm some, and encourage more, but they convert but few: alone they lead men to dissolution of manners, and forgetfulness of God, rather than repentance: not but that mercies are competent and apt instruments of grace, if we would; but because we are more dispersed in our spirits, and, by a prosperous accident, are melted into joy and garishness, and drawn off from the sobriety of recollection. 'Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.' Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity; it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye; glorious indeed in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument. Adam himself (as the rabbins say) did not dwell one night in Paradise, but was poisoned with prosperity, with the beauty of his fair wife, and a beauteous tree: and Noah and Lot were both righteous and exemplary, the one to Sodom, the other to the old world, so long as they lived in a place in which they were obnoxious to the common suffering; but as soon as the one of them had escaped from drowning, and the other from burning, and were put into security, they fell into crimes which have dishonored their memories for above thirty generations together, the crimes of drunkenness and incest. Wealth and a full fortune make men licentiously vicious, tempting a man with power to act all that he can desire or design viciously.

Inde iræ faciles ————
Namque ut opes nimias mundo fortuna subacto
Intulit, et rebus mores cessere secundis,
———— Cultus, gestare decoros
Vix nuribus, rapuere mares;—totoque accersitur orbe
Quo gens quæque perit————.*

And let me observe to you, that though there are in the New Testament many promises and provisions made for the poor in

* Lucan, i. 160.

that very capacity, they having a title to some certain circumstances and additionals of grace and blessing; yet to rich men our blessed Saviour was pleased to make none at all, but to leave them involved in general comprehensions, and to have a title to the special promises only, by becoming poor in spirit, and in preparation of mind, though not in fortune and possession. However, it is hard for God to persuade us to this, till we are taught it by a sad experience, that those prosperities which we think will make us serve God cheerfully, make us to serve the world and secular ends diligently, and God not at all.

Repentance is a duty that best complies with affliction; it is a symbolical estate, of the same complexion and constitution; half the work of repentance is done by a sad accident, our spirits are made sad, our gaieties mortified, our wildness corrected, the water-springs are ready to run over: but if God should grant our desires, and give to most men prosperity, with a design to lead them to repentance, all his pomp, and all his employment, and all his affections and passions, and all his circumstances, are so many degrees of distance from the conditions and nature of repentance. It was reported by Dio concerning Nero's mother, that she often wished that her son might be emperor, and wished it with so great passion, that on that condition she cared not though her son might kill her. Her first wish and her second fear were both granted: but when she began to fear that her son did really design to murder her, she used all the art and instruments of diversion that a witty and a powerful, a timorous person and a woman, could invent or apply. Just so it is with us: so we might have our wishes of prosperity, we promise to undergo all the severities of repentance; but when we are landed on our desire, then every degree of satisfaction of those sensualities is a temptation against repentance; for a man must have his affections weaned from those possessions, before he can be reconciled to the possibilities of repentance.

And because God knows this well, and loves us better than we do ourselves, therefore he sends on us the scrolls of vengeance, 'the hand-writing on the wall,' to denounce judgment against us: for God is so highly resolved to bring us to repentance some way or other, that if, by his goodness, he cannot

shame us into it, he will try if, by his judgments, he can scare us into it: not that he strikes always as soon as he hath sent his warrants out; *οὐδὲ τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν εὐθὺς ἐπέξεισιν ὁ Θεός· ἀλλὰ δίδωσι χρόνον εἰς μετάνοιαν, καὶ τὴν τοῦ ὀφειλήματος ἴασιν*, said Philo. Thus God sent Jonas, and denounced judgments against Nineveh; but with the *ἀνοχὴ*, with the 'forbearance' of forty days for the time of their escape, if they would repent. When Noah, the great preacher of righteousness, denounced the flood to all the world, it was with the *ἀνοχὴ*, with the 'forbearance' of a hundred and twenty years. And when the great extermination of the Jewish nation, and their total deletion from being God's people, was foretold by Christ, and decreed by God; yet they had the *ἀνοχὴ* of forty years, in which they were perpetually called to repentance. These were reprieves and deferrings of the stroke.

But sometimes God strikes once, and then forbears. And such are all those sadnesses, which are less than death: every sickness, every loss, every disgrace, the death of friends and nearest relatives, sudden discontents; these are all of them the louder calls of God to repentance; but still, instances of forbearance.

Indeed, many times this forbearance makes men impudent. It was so in the case of Pharaoh; when God smote him, and then forbore, Pharaoh's heart grew callous and insensible, till God struck again: and this was the meaning of these words of God, 'I will harden the heart of Pharaoh,' that is, I will forbear him; smite him, and then take the blow off: *Sic enim Deus induravit Pharaonis cor*, said St. Basil. For as water taken off from fire will sooner congeal and become icy, than if it had not been attenuated by the heat, so is the heart of some men; when smitten by God, it seems soft and pliable; but taken off from the fire of affliction, it presently becomes horrid, then stiff, and then hard as a rock of adamant, or as the gates of death and hell. But this is beside the purpose and intention of the divine mercy; this is an *ἀντιπερίστασις*, a plain "contradiction" to the riches of God's goodness; this is to be evil, because God is good; to burn with flames, because we are cooled with water; this is to put out the lamps of heaven, or, if we cannot do it, to put our own eyes out, lest we should behold

the fair beauty of the Lord, and be enamored of his goodness, and repent, and live. O take heed of despising this goodness; for this is one of God's latest arts to save us; he hath no way left beyond this, but to punish us with a lasting judgment and a poignant affliction. In the tomb of Terentia, certain lamps burned under ground many ages together; but as soon as ever they were brought into the air, and saw a bigger light, they went out, never to be re-enkindled. So long as we are in the retirements of sorrow, of want, of fear, of sickness, or of any sad accident, we are burning and shining lamps; but when God comes with his ἀνοχή, with his 'forbearance,' and lifts us up from the gates of death, and carries us abroad into the open air, that we converse with prosperity and temptation, we go out in darkness; and we cannot be preserved in heat and light, but by still dwelling in the regions of sorrow. And if such be our weaknesses or our folly, it concerns us to pray against such deliverances, to be afraid of health, to beg of God to continue a persecution, and not to deny us the mercy of an affliction.

And do not we find all this to be a great truth in ourselves? Are we so great strangers to our bwn weaknesses and unworthiness, as not to remember when God scared us with judgments in the neighborhood, where we lived in a great plague, or if we were ever in a storm, or God had sent a sickness on us? Then we may please to remember, that repentance was our business, that we designed mountains of piety, renewed our holy purposes, made vows and solemn sacraments to God to become penitent and obedient persons: and we may also remember, without much considering, that as soon as God began to forbear us, we would no louger forbear to sin, but add flame to flame, a heap of sins to a treasure of wrath, already too big; being like Pharaoh or Herod, or like the ox and mule, more hardy and callous for our stripes; and melted in the fire, and frozen harder in the cold; worse for all our afflictions, and the worse for all God's judgments; not bettered by his goodness, nor mollified by his threatenings: and what is there more left for God to do unto us? He that is not won by the sense of God's mercy, can never find any thing in God that shall convert him; and he whom fear and sense of pain cannot mend, can never

find any argument from himself that shall make him wise. This is sad, that nothing from without, and nothing from within, shall move us; nothing in heaven, and nothing in hell; neither love, nor fear; gratitude to God, nor preservation of ourselves, shall make us to repent. Θεοῦ δὲ πληγὴν οὐχ ὑπερπηδᾷ βροτός· that shall be his final sentence: he shall never escape that ruin from which the greatest art of God could not entice, nor his terror scare him: 'he loved cursing, therefore shall it happen to him; he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him.'

Let, therefore, every one of us take the account of our lives, and read over the sermons that God hath made us; besides that sweet language of his mercy, and his 'still voice' from heaven, consider what voices of thunder you heard, and presently that noise ceased, and God was heard in the 'still voice' again. What dangers have any of you escaped? Were you ever assaulted by the rudeness of an ill-natured man? Have you never had a dangerous fall, and escaped it? Did none of you ever escape drowning, and in a great danger saw the forbearance of God? Have you never been sick (as you feared) unto death? Or, suppose none of these things have happened, hath not God threatened you all, and forborne to smite you? or smitten you, and forborne to kill you? That is evident. But if you had been a privado, and of the cabinet-council with your guardian angel, that from him you might have known how many dangers you have escaped, how often you have been near a ruin, so near, that if you had seen your danger with a sober spirit, the fear of it would have half killed you; if he had but told you how often God had sent out his warrants to the exterminating angel, and our blessed Saviour by his intercession hath obtained a reprieve, that he might have the content of rejoicing at thy conversion and repentance; if you had known from him the secrets of that providence which governs us in secret, and how many thousand times the devil would have done thee hurt, and how often himself, as a ministering spirit of God's 'goodness and forbearance,' did interpose and abate, or divert a mischief which was falling on thy head; it must needs cover thy head with a cloud of shame and blushing at that ingratitude and that folly, that neither will give God thanks, nor secure thy own well-being.

Hadst thou never any dangerous fall in thy intemperance? Then God showed thee thy danger, and that he was angry at thy sin; but yet did so pity thy person, that he would forbear thee a little longer, else that fall had been into thy grave. When thy gluttony gave thee a surfeit, and God gave thee a remedy, his meaning then was, that thy gluttony rather should be cured than thy surfeit; that repentance should have been thy remedy, and abstinence and fasting should be thy cure. Did ever thy proud or revengeful spirit engage thee on a duel, or a vexatious lawsuit, and God brought thee off with life or peace? His purpose then was, that his mercy should teach thee charity. And he that cannot read the purposes of God written with the finger of judgment (for as yet his whole hand is not laid on), either is consigned to eternal ruin, because God will no more endeavor his cure; or if his mercy still continues, and goes on in long-suffering, it shall be by such vexatious instruments, such caustics and corrosives, such tormenting and desperate medicaments, such which, in the very cure, will soundly punish thy folly and ingratitude. For, deceive not yourselves, God's mercy cannot be made a patron for any man's impiety; the purpose of it is to bring us to repentance: and God will do it by the mercies of his mercies, or by mercies of his judgments; he either will break our hearts into a thousand fragments of contrition, or break our bones in the ruins of the grave and hell. And since God rejoices in his mercy above all his works, he will be most impatient that we shall despise that in which he most delights, and in which we have the greatest reason to delight; the riches of that goodness which is essential, and part of his glory, and is communicated to us, to bring us to repentance, that we may partake of that goodness, and behold that glory.

SERMON VI.

PART II.

3. Μακροθυμία, 'long-suffering.'—In this one word are contained all the treasures of the divine goodness: here is the length and extension of his mercy: *Pertrahit spiritum super nos Dominus*, so the Syrian interpreter reads, Luke xviii. 7. "God holds his breath;" he retains his anger within him, lest it should come forth and blast us. And here is also much of the divine justice: for although God suffers long, yet he does not let us alone; he forbears to destroy us, but not to punish us: and in both he, by many accidents, gives probation of his power; according to the prayer of the wise man, Ἐλεεῖς δὲ πάντας, ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι· καὶ παροῤῥᾷς ἁμαρτήματα ἀνθρώπων εἰς μετάνοιαν· 'Thou art merciful towards us all, because thou canst do all things; and thou passest by the sins of men, that they may repent.'* And, that God shall support our spirit, and preserve our patience, and nourish our hope, and correct our stubbornness, and mortify our pride, and bring us to him, whether we will or no, by such gracious violences and merciful judgments, which he uses towards us as his last remedies, is not only the demonstration of a mighty mercy, but of an almighty power. So hard a thing it is to make us leave our follies and become wise, that, were not the mercies of God an effective pity, and clothed in all the way of its progress with mightiness and power, every sinner should perish irrevocably. But this is the fiery trial, the last purgatory fire which God uses to burn the thistles, and purify the dross. When the gentle influence of a sunbeam will not wither them, nor the weeding-hook of a short affliction cut them out; then God comes with fire to burn us, with the axe laid to the root of the tree. But then observe, that when we are under this state of cure, we are so near destruction, that the same instrument that God uses for remedy to us, is also prepared to destroy us; the fire is as apt to burn us

* Wisd. xi. 24.

to ashes, as to cleanse us when we are so overgrown; and the axe is instrumental to cut us down for fuel, as to square us for building in God's temple: and therefore when it comes thus far, it will be hard discerning what the purpose of the axe is; and, whether the fire means to burn, we shall know it by the change wrought on ourselves. For what Plato said concerning his dream of purgatory, is true here: *Quicunque non purgatus migrat ad inferos, jacebit in luto; quicunque vero mitratus illuc accesserit, habitabit cum Deis:* "He that dies in his impurity, shall lie in it for ever; but he that descends to his grave purged and mitred, that is, having quitted his vices, *et superinduens justitiam*, 'being clothed with righteousness,' shall dwell in light and immortality." It is sad that we put God to such extremities: and, as it happens in long diseases, those which physicians use for the last remedies seldom prevail; and when consumptive persons come to have their heads shaven, they do not often escape; so it is when we put God to his last remedies: God indeed hath the glory of his patience and his long-suffering, but we seldom have the benefit and the use of it. For if, when our sin was young, and our strength more active, and our habits less, and virtue not so much a stranger to us,—we suffered sin to prevail on us, to grow stronger than the ruins of our spirit, and to lessen us into the state of sickness and disability, in the midst of all those remedies which God used to our beginning-diseases; much more desperate is our recovery, when our disease is stronger, and our faculties weaker; when our sins reign in us, and our thoughts of virtue are not alive.

However, although I say this, and it is highly considerable to the purpose that we never suffer things to come to this extremity, yet, if it be on us, we must do as well as we can: but then we are to look on it as a design of God's last mercy, beyond which, if we protract our repentance, our condition is desperately miserable. The whole state of which mercy we understand by the parable of the king reckoning with his servants, that were in arrears to him: 'One was brought to him which owed him ten thousand talents; but forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.' The

man, you see, was under the arrest; the sentence was passed on him, he was a condemned man: but before the execution of it, he fell down and worshipped, and said, Κύριε, μακροθύμησον; 'Lord, suffer me longer awhile;' 'have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.' This tells its meaning: this is 'a long-sufferance,' by being 'a forbearance' only of execution of the last sentence, a putting off damnation on a longer trial of our emendation; but in the mean time it implies no other case, but that, together with his long-sufferance, God may use all other severities and scourges to break our untamed spirits, and to soften them with hammers; so death be put off, no matter else what hardships and loads of sufferance we have. *Hic ure, hic seca, ut in æternum parcas;* so St. Austin prayed: "Here, O Lord, cut me, here burn me; spare me not now, that thou mayest spare me for ever." And it is just like the mercy used to a madman, when he is kept in a dark room, and tamed with whips; it is a cruel mercy, but such as his condition requires; he can receive no other mercy; all things else were cruelly unmerciful.

I remember what Bion observed wittily of the punishment inflicted on the daughters of Danaus, whom the old poets feigned to be condemned in hell to fill a bottomless tub with water, and, to increase the pain (as they fancied), this water they were to carry in sieves, and never to leave work till the tub were full; it is well, says he, since their labor must be eternal, that it is so gentle; for it were more pains to carry their water in whole vessels, and a sad burden to go loaden to a leaking tub with unfruitful labors. Just so is the condition of those persons on whom a wrath is gone out: it is a sad sentence, but acted with a gentle instrument; and since they are condemned to pay the scores of their sins with the sufferance of a load of judgments, it is well they are such as will run quite through them, and not stick on them to eternity. *Omnes enim pœnæ non exterminantes, sunt medicinales:* "All punishments whatsoever, which do not destroy us, are intended to save us:" they are lancets which make a wound, but to let forth the venom of our ulcers. When God slew twenty-three thousand of the Assyrians for their fornication, that was a final justice on their persons, and consigned them to a sad eternity: for beyond such

an infliction there was no remedy. But when God sent lions to the Assyrian inhabitants of Samaria, and the judgment drove them to inquire after the manner of the God of the land; and they sent for priests from Jerusalem to teach them how to worship the God of Israel; that was a mercy and a judgment too: 'the long forbearance of God,' who destroyed not all the inhabitants, 'led' the rest 'unto repentance.'

1. And I must make this observation to you; that when things come to this pass, that God is forced to the last remedies of judgments, this long-sufferance will little or nothing concern particular persons, but nations and communities of men: for those who are smitten with judgment, if God takes his hands off again, and so opens a way for their repentance by prolonging their time; that comes under the second part of God's method, the ἀνοχὴ, or 'forbearance:' but if he smites a single person with a final judgment, that is 'a long-suffering,' not of him, but towards others; and God hath destroyed my neighbor, to make me repent, my neighbor's time being expired, and the date of his possibility determined. For a man's death-bed is but an ill station for a penitent; and a final judgment is no good monitor to him, to whom it is a severe executioner. They that perished in the gainsaying of Korah, were out of the conditions of repentance. But the people that were affrighted with the neighborhood of the judgment, and the expresses of God's anger manifested in such visible remonstrances, they were the men called unto repentance. But concerning the whole nations or communities of men, this long-sufferance is a sermon of repentance; loud, clamorous, and highly argumentative. When God suffered the mutinies, the affronts, the baseness and ingratitude, the follies and relapses of the children of Israel, who murmured against God ten times in the wilderness; God sent evil angels among them, and fiery serpents, and pestilence, and fire from heaven, and prodigies from the earth, and a prevailing sword of the enemies: and in all these accidents, although some innocent persons felt the contingencies and variety of mortality, yet those wicked persons, who fell by the design of God's anger, were made examples unto others, and instances of God's forbearance to the nation: and yet this forbearance was such, that although God

preserved the nation in being, and in title to the first promises, yet all the particular persons that came from Egypt, died in the wilderness, two only excepted.

2. And I desire you to observe this, that you may truly estimate the arts of the divine justice and mercy.. For all the world being one continual and intire argument of the divine mercy, we are apt to abuse that mercy to vain confidences and presumption; first mistaking the end, as if God's mercy would be indulgent to our sin, to which it is the greatest enemy in the world: for it is a certain truth, that the mercy of God is as great an enemy to sin as his justice is; and as God's justice is made the handmaid of his mercy to cure sin, so it is the servant also and the instrument to avenge our despite and contempt of mercy; and in all the way, where a difference can be, there justice is the less principal. And it were a great sign of folly, and a huge mistake, to think our Lord and our friends do us offices of kindness, to make themselves more capable of affronts; and that our fathers' care over us, and provision for us, can tempt us to disobey them: the very purpose of all those emanations is, that their love may return in duty, and their providence be the parent of our prudence, and their care be crowned with our piety; and then we shall all be crowned, and shall return like the year, that ends into its own circle; and the fathers and the children, the benefactors and the beneficiary, shall knit the wreath, and bind each other in the eternal enclosures and circlings of immortality. But besides, as the men who presume to sin because of God's mercy, do mistake the very end and design of God's mercy, so they also mistake the economy of it, and the manner of its ministration.

3. For if God suffers men to go on in sins, and punishes them not, it is not a mercy, it is not a forbearance; it is a hardening them, a consigning them to ruin and reprobation: and themselves give the best argument to prove it; for they continue in their sin, they multiply their iniquity, and every day grow more an enemy to God; and that is no mercy, that increases their hostility and enmity with God. A prosperous iniquity is the most unprosperous condition in the whole world. 'When he slew them, they sought him, and turned them early, and inquired after God;' but as long as they prevailed on their

enemies, 'they forgot that God was their strength, and the high God was their redeemer.' It was well observed by the Persian ambassador of old; when he was telling the king a sad story of the overthrow of all his army by the Athenians, he adds this of his own; that the day before the fight, the young Persian gallants, being confident they should destroy their enemies, were drinking drunk, and railing at the timorousness and fears of religion, and against all their gods, saying, there were no such things, and that all things came by chance and industry, nothing by the providence of the Supreme Power. But the next day, when they had fought unprosperously, and, flying from their enemies, who were eager in their pursuit, they came to the river Strymon, which was so frozen that their boats could not launch, and yet it began to thaw, so that they feared the ice would not bear them; then you should see the bold gallants, that the day before said there was no God, most timorously and superstitiously fall on their faces, and beg of God, that the river Strymon might bear them over from their enemies. What wisdom, and philosophy, and perpetual expeperience, and revelation, and promises, and blessings, cannot do, a mighty fear can; it can allay the confidences of bold lust and imperious sin, and soften our spirit into the lowness of a child, our revenge into the charity of prayers, our impudence into the blushings of a chidden girl; and therefore, God hath taken a course proportionable: for he is not so unmercifully merciful, as to give milk to an infirm lust, and hatch the egg to the bigness of a cockatrice. And, therefore, observe how it is that God's mercy prevails over all his works; it is even then when nothing can be discerned but his judgments: for as when a famine had been in Israel in the days of Ahab for three years and a half, when the angry prophet Elijah met the king, and presently a great wind arose, and the dust blew into the eyes of them that walked abroad, and the face of the heavens was black and all tempest, yet then the prophet was the most gentle, and God began to forgive, and the heavens were more beautiful than when the sun puts on the brightest ornaments of a bridegroom, going from his chambers of the east: so it is in the economy of the divine mercy; when God makes our faces black, and the winds blow so loud till the cordage cracks, and

our gay fortunes split, and our houses are dressed with cypress and yew, 'and the mourners go about the streets,' this is nothing but the *pompa misericordiæ*, this is the funeral of our sins, dressed indeed with emblems of mourning, and proclaimed with sad accents of death; but the sight is refreshing, as the beauties of the field which God had blessed, and the sounds are healthful as the noise of a physician.

This is that riddle spoken of in the Psalm, *Calix in manu Domini vini meri plenus misto;* 'The pure impure, the mingled unmingled cup:'* for it is a cup in which God hath poured much of his severity and anger, and yet it is pure unmingled; for it is all mercy. And so the riddle is resolved, and our cup is full and made more wholesome; *Lymphatum crescit, dulcescit, lædere nescit:* it is some justice, and yet it is all mercy; the very justice of God being an act of mercy; a forbearance of the man or the nation, and the punishing the sin. Thus it was in the case of the children of Israel; when they ran after the bleating of the idolatrous calves, Moses prayed passionately, and God heard his prayer, and forgave their sin unto them. And this was David's observation of the manner of God's mercy to them; 'Thou wast a God and forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.'† For God's mercy is given to us by parts, and to certain purposes. Sometimes God only so forgives us, that he does not cut us off in the sin, but yet lays on a heavy load of judgments: so he did to his people, when he sent them to school under the discipline of seventy years' captivity. Sometimes he makes a judgment less, and forgives; in respect of the degree of the infliction, he strikes more gently; and whereas God had designed, it may be, the death of thyself, or thy nearest relative, he is content to take the life of a child. And so he did to David, when he forbore him; 'The Lord hath taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die; nevertheless, the child that is born unto thee, *that* shall die.'‡ Sometimes he puts the evil off to a farther day; as he did in the case of Ahab and Hezekiah: to the first he brought the evil on his house, and to the second he brought the evil on his kingdom in his son's

* Psal. lxxv. 8. † Psal. xcix. 8. ‡ 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

days, God forgiving only so as to respite the evil, that they should have peace in their own days. And thus when we have committed a sin against God, which hath highly provoked him to anger, even on our repentance we are not sure to be forgiven, so as we understand forgiveness, that is, to hear no more of it, never to be called to an account: but we are happy if God so forgive us, as not to throw us into the insufferable flames of hell, though he smite us till we groan for our misery, till we 'chatter like a swallow,' as David's expression is. And though David was an excellent penitent; yet after he had lost the child begotten of Bathsheba, and God had told him he had forgiven him, yet he raised up his darling son against him, and forced him to an inglorious flight, and his son lay with his father's concubines in the face of all Israel. So that when we are forgiven, yet it is ten to one but God will make us to smart and roar for our sins, for the very disquietness of our souls.

For if we sin and ask God forgiveness, and then are quiet, we feel so little inconvenience in the trade, that we may more easily be tempted to make a trade of it indeed. I wish to God that for every sin we have committed, we could heartily cry "God mercy" and leave it, and judge ourselves for it, to prevent God's anger: but when we have done all that we commonly call repentance, and when possibly God hath forgiven us to some purposes, yet, it may be, he punishes our sin when we least think of it; that sin which we have long since forgotten. It may be, for the lust of thy youth thou hast a healthless old age. An old religious person long ago complained it was his case.

> Quos nimis effrænes habui, nunc vapulo renes:
> Sic luitur juvenis culpa dolore senis.

It may be, thy sore eyes are the punishment of intemperance seven years ago; or God cuts thy days shorter, and thou shalt die in a florid age; or he raises up afflictions to thee in thine own house, in thine own bowels; or hath sent a gangrene into thy estate; or with an arrow out of his quiver he can wound thee, and the arrow shall stick fast in thy flesh, although God hath forgiven thy sin to many purposes. Our blessed Saviour

'was heard in all that he prayed,' said the Apostle; and he prayed for the Jews that crucified him, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do:' and God did forgive that great sin, but how far? whereas it was just in God to deprive them of all possibility of receiving benefit from the death of Christ, yet God admitted them to it; he gave them time, and possibilities, and helps, and great advantages to bring them to repentance; he did not presently shut them up in his final and eternal anger; and yet he had finally resolved to destroy their city and nation, and did so, but forbore them forty years, and gave them all the helps of miracles and sermons apostolical to shame them, and force them into sorrow for their fault. And before any man can repent, God hath forgiven the man in one degree of forgiveness; for he hath given him grace of repentance, and taken from him that final anger of the spirit of reprobation: and when a man hath repented, no man can say that God hath forgiven him to all purposes, but hath reserves of anger to punish the sin, to make the man afraid to sin any more; and to represent, that when any man hath sinned, whatever he does afterward, he shall be miserable as long as he lives, vexed with its adherences and its neighborhood and evil consequence. For as no man that hath sinned, can, during his life, ever return to an integral and perfect innocence, so neither shall he be restored to a perfect peace; but must always watch and strive against his sin, and always mourn and pray for its pardon, and always find cause to hate it, by knowing himself to be for ever in danger of enduring some grievous calamity, even for those sins for which he hath truly repented him, for which God hath, in many gracious degrees, passed his pardon: this is the manner of dispensation of the divine mercy, in respect of particular persons and nations too.

But sometimes we find a severer judgment happening on a people; and yet in that sad story God's mercy sings the triumph, which although it be much to God's glory, yet it is a sad story to sinning people. Six hundred thousand fighting men, besides women and children and decrepit persons, came out of Egypt; and God destroyed them all in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua: and there it was that God's mercy prevailed over his justice, that he did not destroy the nation,

but still preserved a succession to Jacob, to possess the promise. God drowned all the world except eight persons; his mercy there also prevailed over his justice, that he preserved a remnant to mankind; his justice devoured all the world, and his mercy, which preserved but eight, had the honor of the prevailing attribute. God destroyed Sodom and the five cities of the plain, and rescued but four from the flames of that sad burning, and of the four lost one in the flight; and yet his mercy prevailed over his justice, because he did not destroy all.

And in these senses we are to understand the excellency of the divine mercy: even when he smites, when 'he rebukes us for sin,' when he makes 'our beauty to fail, and our flesh to consume away like a moth fretting a garment,' yet then his mercy is the prevailing ingredient. If his judgments be but fines set on our heads, according to the mercy of our old laws, *salvo contenemento*, "so as to preserve our estates," to continue our hopes and possibilities of heaven; all the other judgments can be nothing but mercies, excellent instruments of grace, arts to make us sober and wise, to take us off from our vanity, to restrain our wildnesses, which, if they were left unbridled, would set all the world on fire. God's judgments are like the censures of the church, in which a sinner is 'delivered over to Satan to be buffeted, that the spirit may be saved.' The result of all this is, that God's mercies are not, ought not, cannot be instruments of confidence to sin, because the very purpose of his mercy is to the contrary; and the very manner of his economy and dispensation is such, that God's mercy goes along in complexion and conjunction with his judgments: the riches of his forbearance is this, that he forbears to throw us into hell, and sends the mercies of his rod to chide us unto repentance, and the mercies of his rod to punish us for having sinned, and that when we have sinned we may never think ourselves secured, nor ever be reconciled to such dangers and deadly poisons. This, this is the manner of the divine mercy. Go now, fond man, and, because God is merciful, presume to sin, as having grounds to hope that thou mayest sin, and be safe all the way! If this—hope, shall I call it, or sordid flattery, could be reasonable, then the mercies of God would not lead us to repentance; so unworthy are we in the

sense and largeness of a wide fortune and pleasant accident. For impunity was never a good argument to make men to obey laws. *Quotusquisque reperitur, qui impunitate proposita abstinere possit injuriis? Impunitas est maxima peccandi illecebra*, said Cicero.* And therefore, the wisdom of God hath so ordered the actions of the world, that the most fruitful showers shall be wrapped up in a cover of black clouds; that health shall be conveyed by bitter and ill-tasted drugs; that the temples of our bodies shall be purged by whips, and that the cords of the whip shall be the cords of love, to draw us from the entanglings of vanity and folly. This is the long-suffering of God, the last remedy to our diseased souls, *ἀναίσθητος, ὅστις πολλὰ παθὼν οὐ σωφρονίζεται*, said Phalaris; unless we be senseless, we shall be brought to sober courses by all those sad accidents, and wholesome but ill-tasted mercies, which we feel in all the course and succession of the divine long-sufferance.

The use of all the premises is that, which St. Paul expresses in the text, that 'we do not despise all this:' and he only despises not, who serves the ends of God in all these designs of mercy; that is, he that repents him of his sins. But there are a great many despisers; all they that live in their sins, they that have more blessings than they can reckon hours in their lives, that are courted by the divine favor and wooed to salvation, as if mankind were to give, not to receive, so great a blessing; all they that answer not to so friendly summons,—they are despisers of God's mercies: and although God overflows with mercies, and does not often leave us to the only hopes of being cured by unctions and gentle cataplasms, but proceeds farther, and gives us *stribium*, or prepared steel, sharp arrows of his anger, and the sword, and the hand of sickness; yet we are not sure of so much favor as to be entertained longer in God's hospital, but may be thrust forth among the *incurabiles*. Plutarch reports concerning swine, that their optic nerves are so disposed to turn their eyes downward, that they cannot look upwards, nor behold the face of heaven, unless they be thrown on their backs. Such swine are we: we seldom can look up to

* Cicer. pro Mil. 44.

heaven, till God by his judgments throws us on our backs; till he humbles us and softens us with showers of our own blood, and tears of sorrow: and yet God hath not promised that he will do so much for us; but for aught we know, as soon as ever the devil enters into our swinish and brutish hearts, we shall run down the hill, and perish in the floods and seas of intolerable misery. And therefore, besides that it is a huge folly in us, that we will not be cured with pleasant medicines, but must be longing for coloquintida and for vomits, for knives and poniards, instead of the gentle showers of the divine refreshments, besides that this is an imprudence and sottishness; we do infinitely put it to the venture, whether we shall be in a saveable condition or no, after the rejection of the first state of mercies. But, however, then begins the first step of the judgment and pungent misery, we are perishing people; or, if not, yet at the least not to be cured without the abscission of a member, without the cutting off a hand or a leg, or the putting out of an eye: we must be cut, to take the stone out of our hearts, and that is the state of a very great infelicity; and if we escape the stone, we cannot escape the surgeon's knife; if we escape death, yet we have a sickness; and though that be a great mercy in respect of death, yet it is as great a misery in respect of health. And that is the first punishment for the despite done to the first and most sensible mercies; we are fallen into a sickness, that cannot be cured but by disease and hardship.

But if this despite runs farther, and when the mercies look on us with an angry countenance, and that God gives us only the mercy of a punishment, if we despise this too, we increase but our misery, as we increase our sin. The sum of which is this: that if Pharaoh will not be cured by one plague, he shall have ten; and if ten will not do it, the great and tenth wave, which is far bigger than all the rest, the severest and the last arrow of the quiver, then we shall perish in the Red Sea, the sea of flames and blood, in which the ungodly shall roll eternally.

But some of these despisers are such as are unmoved when God smites others; like Gallio, when the Jews took Sosthenes, and beat him in the pleading-place, he 'cared for none of these things;' he was not concerned in that interest: and many Gal-

tios there are among us, that understand it not to be a part of the divine method of God's long-sufferance, to strike others to make us afraid. But however we sleep in the midst of such alarms, yet know, that there is not one death in all the neighborhood but is intended to thee; every crowing of the cock is to awake thee to repentance: and if thou sleepest still, the next turn may be thine; God will send his angel, as he did to Peter, and smite thee on thy side, and wake thee from thy dead sleep of sin and sottishness. But beyond this some are despisers still, and hope to drown the noises of Mount Sinai, the sound of cannons, of thunders and lightnings, with a counter-noise of revelling and clamorous roarings, with merry meetings; like the sacrifices to Moloch, they sound drums and trumpets, that they might not hear the sad shriekings of their children, as they were dying in the cavity of the brazen idol: and when their conscience shrieks out or murmurs in a sad melancholy, or something that is dear to them is smitten, they attempt to drown it in a sea of drink, in the heathenish noises of idle and drunken company; and that which God sends to lead them to repentance, leads them to a tavern, not to refresh their needs of nature, or for ends of a tolerable civility, or innocent purposes; but, like the condemned persons among the Levantines, they tasted wine freely, that they might die and be insensible. I could easily reprove such persons with an old Greek proverb mentioned by Plutarch, Περὶ τῆς Εὐθυμίας: Οὔτε ποδάγρας ἀπαλλάττει κάλκιος, "You shall ill be cured of the knotted gout, if you have nothing else but a wide shoe." But this reproof is too gentle for so great a madness: it is not only an incompetent cure, to apply the plaster of a sin or vanity to cure the smart of a divine judgment; but it is a great increaser of the misery, by swelling the cause to bigger and monstrous proportions. It is just as if an impatient fool, feeling the smart of his medicine, shall tear his wounds open, and throw away the instruments of his cure, because they bring him health at the charge of a little pain. Ἐγγὺς Κυρίου πλήρης μαστίγων, "He that is full of stripes" and troubles, and decked round about with thorns, he "is near to God:" but he that, because he sits uneasily, when he sits near the King that was crowned with

thorns, shall remove thence, or strew flowers, roses and jessamine, the down of thistles and the softest gossamer, that he may die without pain, die quietly and like a lamb, sink to the bottom of hell without noise; this man is a fool, because he accepts death if it arrest him in civil language, is content to die by the sentence of an eloquent judge, and prefers a quiet passage to hell before going to heaven in a storm.

That Italian gentleman was certainly a great lover of his sleep, who was angry with the lizard that waked him, when a viper was creeping into his mouth: when the devil is entering into us to poison our spirits, and steal our souls away while we are sleeping in the lethargy of sin, God sends his sharp messages to awaken us; and we call that the enemy, and use arts to cure the remedy, not to cure the disease. There are some persons that will never be cured, not because the sickness is incurable, but because they have ill stomachs, and cannot keep the medicine. Just so is his case that so despises God's method of curing him by these instances of long-sufferance, that he uses all the arts he can to be quit of his physician, and to spill his physic, and to take cordials as soon as his vomit begins to work. There is no more to be said in this affair, but to read the poor wretch's sentence, and to declare his condition. As at first, when he despised the first great mercies, God sent him sharpness and sad accidents to ensober his spirits; so now that he despises his mercy also, the mercy of the rod, God will take it away from him, and then I hope all is well. Miserable man that thou art! this is thy undoing; if God ceases to strike thee, because thou wilt not mend, thou art sealed up to ruin and reprobation for ever; the physician hath given thee over, he hath no kindness for thee. This was the desperate estate of Judah, 'Ah, sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel. Why should ye be stricken any more?'* This is the ἀνάθεμα μαρὰν ἀθὰ, the most bitter curse, the greatest excommunication, when the delinquent is become a heathen and a publican without the covenant, out of the pale of the church:

* Isaiah, i. 4, 5.

the church hath nothing to do with them: 'for what have I to do with them that are without?' said St. Paul. It was not lawful for the church any more to punish them. And this court Christian is an imitation and parallel of the justice of the court of heaven: when a sinner is not mended by judgments at long-running, God cuts him off from his inheritance, and the lot of sons; he will chastise him no more, but let him take his course, and spend his portion of prosperity, such as shall be allowed him in the great economy of the world. Thus God did to his vineyard which he took such pains to fence, to plant, to manure, to dig, to cut, and to prune: and when, after all, it brought forth wild grapes, the last and worst of God's anger was this; *Auferam sepem ejus;** God had fenced it with a hedge of thorns, and 'God would take away all that hedge,' he would not leave a thorn standing, not one judgment to reprove or admonish them; but all the wild beasts, and wilder and more beastly lusts, may come and devour it, and trample it down in scorn.

And now what shall I say, but those words quoted by St. Paul in his sermon, 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish;'† perish in your own folly by stubbornness and ingratitude. For it is a huge contradiction to the nature and designs of God: God calls us, we refuse to hear; he invites us with fair promises, we hear and consider not; he gives us blessings, we take them and understand not his meaning; we take out the token, but read not the letter: then he threatens us, and we regard not; he strikes our neighbors, and we are not concerned: then he strikes us gently, but we feel it not: then he does like the physician in the Greek epigram, who being to cure a man of lethargy, locked him into the same room with a madman, that he by dry-beating him might make him at least sensible of blows; but this makes us, instead of running to God, to trust in unskilful physicians, or, like Saul, to run to a Pythonisse: we run for cure to a crime, we take sanctuary in a pleasant sin; just as if a man, to cure his melancholy, should desire to be stung with a tarantula, that at

* Isaiah, v. 5. † Acts xiii. 41.

least he may die merrily. What is there more to be done that God hath not yet done? He is forced at last to break off with a *Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata*, 'We dressed and tended Babylon,' but she was incurable: there is no help but such persons must die in their sins, and lie down in eternal sorrow.

SUMMARY OF SERMON VII.

2 PETER, CHAP. III.—VERSE 18.

PART I.

WHEN Christianity first enlightened the world, amazing the minds of men, entertaining their curiosity, and seizing on their affections, it was no wonder that whole nations were converted at a sermon, that multitudes were instantly professed, that their understandings followed their affections, and their wills followed their understandings, &c. All this was a great instance of providence, for the firm planting of Christianity, and affording precedents and examples to all future ages. Universality and fervor of piety among Christians in those early times descanted on. This lasted about three hundred years; after which it has gone on declining: heresies first crept in, pride increased, faith was weakened, and charity was lessened, &c.

But because such is the nature of things, that either they grow towards perfection, or decline towards dissolution, there is no proper way to secure religion, but by setting its growth forward.

The way of doing this indicated in the text, *but grow in grace.* Considerations proposed concerning, 1. what the state of grace is, into which we must enter, in order that we may grow in it: 2. the proper parts, acts, and offices of *growing in grace*; 3. the proper signs, consequences, and significations, whereby we may perceive that *we are grown*, and so judge of our state, &c.

1. Concerning the state of grace, it may be said, that no man

can be in it who retains an affection for any one sin: this topic enlarged on. When we have left every sin, when we resolve never to return to the chains, when we have no love for the world, but such as may become a servant of God, then we may be said to have entered into a state of grace, whence this precept may commence, *grow in grace, and in the knowlege of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And now the first part of this duty is, to make religion the chief business of life; for this is the great instrument to produce our growth in grace, and the perfection of a Christian; for a man cannot, after a state of sin, be instantly a saint, &c.: this topic enlarged on. God has sent us into the world for religion; we are but to pass through our pleasant fields or our hard labors, to lodge awhile in our fair palaces or in our meaner cottages; but then only it is that man does his proper employment, when he prays, acts charitably, restrains his lusts and passions, and strives to imitate his Saviour. Then he is dressing himself for eternity, where he must abide, either in bliss or in misery, &c. Let us not be weary then in well-doing, &c. That is the first particular.

2. The second step of our growth is, when virtues grow habitual, apt and easy in our manners and dispositions. The way is long and difficult at first; but in the progress and pursuit we find all the knots made plain, and the rough ways made smooth. The spirit of grace is like a new soul within a man, giving him new appetites and new pleasures, rendering worldly things unsavory to his appetite, but those of religion delicious: this topic enlarged on.

3. But because, in the course of holy living, the sensible relishes, the flowerings of affection, the zeal and visible expressions do not always make the same emission, but we are sometimes more busy and intent on the actions of religion; in such cases we are to judge of our growth in grace, if, after every interval of extraordinary piety, the next return be more devout

and affectionate, the labor more cheerful and active;—if religion returns oftener, stays longer, and leaves more satisfaction in the spirit: this dilated on.

4. To discern our growth in grace, we must inquire concerning our passions, whether they be mortified and quiet, complying with the ends of virtue, and under command; for since they are the matter of virtue and vice respectively, he that hath brought into his power all the strengths of the enemy, and the fortresses from whence the enemy infested him, he only hath secured a holy walking with God. But because this thing is never perfectly done, and yet must always be doing, grace grows according as we finish our portions of the work.

And although no man must take account of his being in or out of the state of grace, by his being dispassionate; yet, as to the securing that state, he must provide that he be not the slave of passion: so to declare his growth in grace, he must be sure to take the measures of his affections, and see that they be lessened: he must see if his fear be turned into caution, his lust into chaste friendship, his imperious spirit into prudent government, his revenge into justice, &c.: and not this only; in his scrutiny and judgment concerning his passions, he must watch against passions in the reflex act, against self-complacency or peevishness attending on virtue: this explained. Conclusion.

PART II.

5. He is well grown in or towards the state of grace, who is more patient of a sharp reproof than of a secret flattery. They who are furious against their monitors are incorrigible; but it is one degree of meekness to suffer discipline; and a meek man cannot easily be a bad man, especially in the present instance. But it must be observed that this is only a good disposition towards repentance and restitution; it is a sign of growth in grace, according as it becomes natural, easy, and habitual. To

endure a reproof without adding a new sin, is the first step to amendment; that is, to endure it without scorn, hatred, or indignation. 2. The next is to suffer reproof without excusing ourselves; which is only to set it aside in a civil manner. 3. Then he that proceeds in this instance, will admit it without regret, or secret murmuring and unwillingness. 4. But if, in addition to this, he voluntarily confesses his fault, and eases his spirit of the infection, then it is certain that he is not only a professed enemy to sin, but a zealous and prudent person, active against all its interests; who never counts himself at ease but while he rests on the banks of Sion, or at the gates of the temple; he reckons it no shame to be abased in the face of men, so that he may be gracious in the sight of God: this topic enlarged on.

6. He that is grown in grace and the knowlege of Christ, esteems no sin to be little or contemptible; none fit to be cherished or indulged in. He not only thinks that it is inconsistent with the love of God to entertain any indecency or beginning of a crime, but he always remembers how much it cost him to arrive at the good state to which the grace of God hath already brought him. It makes men negligent when they have an opinion that they are persons extraordinary in nothing; that a little care will not mend them; that another sin cannot make them much worse: but it is a sign of a tender conscience and a reformed spirit, when a man is sensible of every alteration; when an idle word is troublesome; when a wandering thought puts the spirit on its guard; when a too free merriment is wiped off with a sigh and a sad thought, a severe recollection, and a holy prayer.

7. He that is grown in grace, pursues virtue for its own interest, without the mixture of collateral designs and equally-inclining purposes. God, in the beginning of our returns to him, entertains us with promises and threats, and the apprehension of temporal advantages, with fear and with shame, &c.;

and, at first, men snatch at the lesser or lower ends of virtue, and such rewards as are visible, and which God sometimes gives in hand, to entertain our weak and imperfect desires: this topic enlarged on. But perfect persons should serve God out of mere love to him and his divine excellences; and, doubtless, many come to that growth of charity, that the goodness and excellency of God are more pressing on their spirit than any considerations of reward; they love God for himself, and do their duties for the fruition of him and his pleasure; all that, is but heaven in another sense, and under another name.

8. Some men there are, who in the beginning of their holy walking with God, and while they are babes in Christ, are presently busied in delights of prayers, and rejoice in public communion, and count all solemn assemblies as festivals: but as they are pleased with them, so they can easily be without them: but it is the sign of a common and vulgar love, only to be pleased with the company of a friend, and to be as well without him: this enlarged on.

9. But as some are active only in the presence of a good object, but remiss and careless for the want of it; so, on the other hand, an infant grace is safe in the absence of a temptation, but falls easily when it is in presence. He, therefore, that would understand if he be grown in grace, may consider if his safety consists only in peace, or in the strength of the Spirit. It is good that we will not seek opportunities of sin; but are we not too apprehensive of it when it is presented? or do we not sink under it when it presses us? This topic enlarged on.

10. No man is grown in grace, but he that is ready for every work; that chooses not his employment; that refuses no imposition from God, or his superior. A ready hand, an obedient heart, and a willing, cheerful soul, in all the work of God, and in every office of religion, is a great index of a good proficient in the ways of godliness. This is not to be expected

from beginners; for they must be enticed with fit employments; and it may be that their office and work so fits their spirits, as to make them first in love with it, and then with God for giving it: this enlarged on.

11. Lastly; some there are, who are firm in all great and foreseen changes, and have laid up in the storehouses of the spirit, reason and religion, arguments and discourses enough to defend them against all violences, &c.: but something may be wanting yet; and in the direct progress towards heaven, that may be called an infallible sign of a great grace, and the greatest degree of it, when a man is prepared against sudden invasions of the spirit, surreptitious and extemporary assaults: this topic enlarged on. These are the parts, acts, and offices of our growing in grace: concerning which a few cautions must be interposed.

1. The growth of grace is to be estimated as other moral things are; not according to the growth of things natural. Grace does not grow by observation, and a continual efflux, and a constant proportion, &c.

2. It is not always to be discerned, in single instances, or in single graces.

3. We must be careful to observe that these rules are not all to be understood negatively, but positively and affirmatively: that is, a man may conclude he is grown in grace, if he observe in himself the characters above mentioned; but he must not conclude negatively, or that he is not grown in grace, if he cannot observe such signal testimonies: this enlarged on.

4. In considering our growth in grace, let us take more care to reckon matters that concern justice and charity, than those that concern the virtue of religion; because in these may be much, in the other there cannot easily be any illusion and cozenage.

To these parts and actions of a good life, or growth in grace, are added some considerations, which are rather signs than

parts of it: such as, 1. to praise all good things, and to imitate what we praise: 2. to feel a noble emulation: 3. to bear sickness patiently, and to improve it: 4. devotion and delight in prayer: 5. whispers of God's Spirit, prompting us to obedience: 6. the offering of peace to those that have injured us, &c.: 7. love to the brethren: 8. not repining at the honors or fortune of others: 9. a freedom from temptation, &c.: 10. an excellent habit of body and of the material passions: 11. peculiar acts of devotion; but though these may proceed from a great love of virtue, yet because some men may do these and no more, they are not to be relied on: but we must be content to work on still. Conclusion.

SERMON VII.

OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

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2 PETER, CHAP. III.—VERSE 18.

But grow in grace, and in the knowlege of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

PART I.

WHEN Christianity, like the day-spring from the east, with a new light, did not only enlighten the world, but amazed the minds of men, and entertained their curiosities, and seized on their warmer and more pregnant affections, it was no wonder, that whole nations were converted at a sermon, and multitudes were instantly professed, and their understandings followed their affections, and their wills followed their understandings, and they were convinced by miracle, and overcome by grace, and passionate with zeal, and wisely governed by their guides, and ravished with the sanctity of the doctrine, and the holiness of their examples. And this was not only their duty, but a great instance of providence, that by the great religion and piety of the first professors, Christianity might be firmly planted, and unshaken by scandal, and hardened by persecution; and that these first lights might be actual precedents for ever, and copies for us to transcribe in all descending ages of Christianity, that thither we might run to fetch oil to enkindle our extinguished lamps. But then piety was so universal, that it might well be enjoined by St. Paul, that 'if a brother walked disorderly,' the Christians should avoid his company: he for-

bade them not to accompany with the heathens that walked disorderly, 'for then a man must have gone out of the world;' but they were not to endure so much as 'to eat with,' or 'to salute a disorderly brother,' and ill-living Christian. But now, if we should observe this canon of St. Paul, and refuse to eat or to converse with a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a perjured person, or covetous, we must also 'go out of the world:' for a pious or a holy person is now as rare as a disorderly Christian was at first; and as Christianity is multiplied every where in name and title, so it is destroyed in life, essence, and proper operation; and we have very great reason to fear, that Christ's name will serve us to no end but to upbraid our baseness, and his person only to be our judge, and his laws as so many bills of accusation, and his graces and helps offered us but as aggravations of our unworthiness, and our baptism but an occasion of vow-breach, and the holy communion but an act of hypocrisy, formality, or sacrilege, and all the promises of the gospel but as pleasant dreams, and the threatenings but as arts of affrightment. For Christianity lasted pure and zealous; it kept its rules, and observed its own laws for three hundred years, or thereabouts; so long the church remained a virgin; for so long they were warmed with their first fires, and kept under discipline by the rod of persecution: but it hath declined almost fourteen hundred years together; prosperity and pride, wantonness and great fortunes, ambition and interest, false doctrine on mistake and on design, the malice of the devil and the arts of all his instruments, the want of zeal and a weariness of spirit, filthy examples and a disreputation of piety and a strict life, seldom precedents and infinite discouragements have caused so infinite a declension of piety and holy living, that what Papirius Massonius, one of their own, said of the popes of Rome, *In pontificibus nemo hodie sanctitatem requirit; optimi putantur, si vel leviter mali sint, vel minus boni quam cæteri mortales esse solent:* "No man looks for holiness in the bishops of Rome; those are the best popes who are not extremely wicked:" the same is too true of the greatest part of Christians; men are excellent persons if they be not traitors, or adulterous, oppressors, or injurious, drunkards, or scandalous, if they be not 'as this publican,' as the vilest person with whom they converse.

Nunc, si depositum non inficietur amicus,
Si reddat veterem cum tota ærugine follem;
Prodigiosa fides, et Tuscis digna libellis,
Quæque coronata lustrari debeat agna.
Juven. Sat. xiii. 60.

He that is better than the dregs of his own age, whose religion is something above profaneness, and whose sobriety is a step or two from downright intemperance, whose discourse is not swearing, nor yet apt to edify, whose charity is set out in piety, and a gentle yearning and saying "God help," whose alms are contemptible, and his devotion infrequent; yet, as things are now, he is *unus e millibus*, "one of a thousand," and he stands eminent and conspicuous in the valleys and lower grounds of the present piety; for a bank is a mountain on a level: but what is rare and eminent in the manners of men this day, would have been scandalous, and have deserved the rod of an apostle, if it had been confronted with the fervors and rare devotion and religion of our fathers in the gospel.

Men of old looked on themselves as they stood by the examples and precedents of martyrs, and compared their piety to the life of St. Paul, and estimated their zeal by flames of the Boanerges, St. James and his brother; and the bishops were thought reprovable, as they fell short of the ordinary government of St. Peter and St. John; and the assemblies of Christians were so holy, that every meeting had religion enough to hallow a house, and convert it to a church; and every day of feasting was a communion, and every fasting-day was a day of repentance and alms, and every day of thanksgiving was a day of joy and alms; and religion began all their actions, and prayer consecrated them, and they ended in charity, and were not polluted with design: they despised the world heartily, and pursued after heaven greedily; they knew no ends but to serve God, and to be saved; and had no designs on their neighbors, but to lead them to God and to felicity; till Satan, full of envy to see such excellent days, mingled covetousness and ambition within the throngs and conventions of the church, and a vice crept into an office; and then the mutual confidence grew less, and so charity was lessened; and heresies crept in,

and then faith began to be sullied; and pride crept in, and then men snatched at offices, not for the work, but for the dignity; and then they served themselves more than God and the church; till at last it came to that pass where now it is, that the clergy live lives no better than the laity, and the laity are stooped to imitate the evil customs of strangers and enemies of Christianity; so that we should think religion in a good condition, if that men did offer up to God but the actions of an ordinary, even, and just life, without the scandal and allays of a great impiety. But because such is the nature of things, that either they grow towards perfection, or decline towards dissolution; there is no proper way to secure it but by setting its growth forward: for religion hath no station or natural periods; if it does not grow better, it grows much worse; not that it always returns the man into scandalous sins, but that it establishes and fixes him in a state of indifference and lukewarmness; and he is more averse to a state of improvement, and dies in an incurious, ignorant, and unrelenting condition.

'But grow in grace:'—That is the remedy, and that would make us all wise and happy, blessed in this world, and sure of heaven: concerning which, we are to consider, first, what the state of grace is, into which every one of us must be entered, that we may 'grow' in it: secondly, the proper parts, acts, and offices of 'growing in grace:' thirdly, the signs, consequences, and proper significations, by which if we cannot perceive 'the growing,' yet afterwards we may perceive that 'we are grown,' and so judge of the state of our duty, and concerning our final condition of being saved.

1. Concerning the state of grace, I consider that no man can be said to be in the state of grace, who retains an affection to any one sin. The state of pardon and the Divine favor begins at the first instance of anger against our crimes, when we leave our fondnesses and kind opinions, when we excuse them not, and will not endure their shame, when we feel the smarts of any of their evil consequents: for he that is a perfect lover of sin, and is sealed up to a reprobate sense, endures all that sin brings along with it; and is reconciled to all its mischiefs: he can suffer the sickness of his own drunkenness, and yet call it pleasure; he can wait like a slave to serve his lust, and yet

count it no disparagement; he can suffer the dishonor of being accounted a base and dishonest person, and yet look confidently, and think himself no worse. But when the grace of God begins to work on a man's spirit, it makes the conscience nice and tender: and although the sin, as yet, does not displease the man, but he can endure the flattering and alluring part, yet he will not endure to be used so ill by his sin; he will not be abused and dishonored by it. But because God hath so allayed the pleasure of his sin, that he that drinks the sweet, should also strain the dregs through his throat; by degrees God's grace doth irreconcile the convert, and discovers first, its base attendants, then its worse consequents, then the displeasure of God; that here commence the first resolutions of leaving the sin, and trying if, in the service of God, his spirit and the whole appetite of man may be better entertained. He that is thus far entered, shall quickly perceive the difference, and meet arguments enough to invite him farther: for then God treats the man as he treated the spies, that went to discover the land of promise; he ordered the year in plenty, and directed them to a pleasant and a fruitful place, and prepared bunches of grapes of a miraculous and prodigious greatness, that they might report good things of Canaan, and invite the whole nation to attempt its conquest: so God's grace represents to the new converts, and the weak ones in faith, the pleasures and first deliciousnesses of religion; and when they come to spy the good things of that way that leads to heaven, they presently perceive themselves eased of the load of an evil conscience, of their fears of death, of the confusion of their shame; and God's Spirit gives them a cup of sensible comfort, and makes them to rejoice in their prayers, and weep with pleasures mingled with innocent passion and religious changes. And although God does not deal with all men in the same method, or in manners that can regularly be described, and all men do not feel, or do not observe, or cannot, for want of skill, discern, such accidental sweetnesses and pleasant grapes at their first entrance into religion; yet God to every man does minister excellent arguments of invitation; and such, that if a man will attend to them, they will certainly move either his affections or his will, his fancy or his reason, and most commonly both.

But while the Spirit of God is doing this work in man, man must also be σύνεργος τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'a fellow-worker with God;' he must entertain the Spirit, attend his inspirations, receive his whispers, obey all his motions, invite him farther, and truly renounce all confederacy with his enemy, sin; at no hand suffering any 'root of bitterness to spring up,' not allowing to himself any reserve of carnal pleasure, no clancular lust, no private oppressions, no secret covetousness, no love to this world, that may discompose his duty. For if a man prays all day, and at night is intemperate; if he spends his time in reading, and his recreation be sinful; if he studies religion, and practises self-interest; if he leaves his swearing, and yet retains his pride; if he becomes chaste, and yet remains peevish and imperious; this man is not changed from the state of sin into the first stage of the state of grace, he does at no hand belong to God; he hath suffered himself to be scared from one sin, and tempted from another by interest, and hath left a third by reason of his inclination, and a fourth for shame or want of opportunity; but the Spirit of God hath not yet planted one perfect plant there: God may make use of the accidentally-prepared advantages; but as yet the Spirit of God hath not begun the proper and direct work of grace in his heart. But when we leave every sin, when we resolve never to return to the chains, when we have no love for the world but such as may become a servant of God; then I account that we are entered into a state of grace, from whence I am now to begin to reckon the commencement of this precept, 'Grow in grace, and in the knowlege of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

And now the first part of this duty is,—to make religion to be the business of our lives;—for this is the great instrument which will naturally produce our growth in grace, and the perfection of a Christian. For a man cannot, after a state of sin, be instantly a saint; the work of Heaven is not done by a flash of lightning, or a dash of affectionate rain, or a few tears of a relenting pity: God and his church have appointed holy intervals, and have taken portions of our time for religion, that we may be called off from the world, and remember the end of our creation, and do honor to God, and think of heaven with hearty purposes and peremptory designs to get thither. But as

we must not neglect those times, which God hath reserved for his service, or the church hath prudently decreed; nor yet act religion on such days with forms and outsides, or to comply with customs, or to seem religious: so we must take care, that all the other portions of our time be hallowed with little retirements of our thoughts, and short conversations with God, and all along be guided with holy intention; that even our works of nature may pass into the relations of grace, and the actions of our calling may help towards the 'obtaining the prize of our high calling;' while our eatings are actions of temperance, our labors are profitable, our humiliations are acts of obedience, and our alms of charity, and our marriages are chaste; and 'whether we eat or drink,' sleep or wake, we may 'do all to the glory of God,' by a direct intuition, or by a reflex act; by design, or by supplement; by foresight, or by an after-election. And to this purpose we must not look on religion as our trouble and our hinderance, nor think alms chargeable or expensive, nor our fastings vexatious and burdensome, nor our prayers a weariness of spirit: but we must make these, and all other the duties of religion, our employment, our care, the work and end for which we came into the world; and remember that we never do the work of men, nor serve the ends of God, nor are in the proper employment and business of our life, but when we worship God, or live like wise or sober persons, or do benefit to our brother.

I will not turn this discourse into a reproof, but leave it represented as a duty. Remember that God sent you into the world for religion; we are but to pass through our pleasant fields, or our hard labors; but to lodge a little while in our fair palaces, or our meaner cottages; but to buit in the way at our full tables, or with our spare diet; but then only man does his proper employment, when he prays and does charity, and mortifies his unruly appetites, and restrains his violent passions, and becomes like to God, and imitates his holy Son, and writes after the copies of Apostles and saints. Then he is dressing himself for eternity, where he must dwell or abide, either in an excellent beatifical country, or in a prison of amazement and eternal horror: and after all this, you may, if you please, call to mind how much time you allow to God and to your souls

every day, or every month, or in a year, if you please, for I fear the account of the time is soon made; but the account for the neglect will be harder; and it will not easily be answered, that all our days and years are little enough to attend perishing things, and to be swallowed up in avaricious and vain attendances, and we shall not attend to religion with a zeal so great as is our revenge, or as is the hunger of one meal. Without much time, and a wary life, and a diligent circumspection, we cannot mortify our sins, or do the first works of grace. I pray God we be not found to have grown like the sinews of old age, from strength to remissness; from thence to dissolution, and infirmity, and death. Menedemus was wont to say, "that the young boys that went to Athens, the first year were wise men, the second year philosophers, the third orators, and the fourth were but plebeians, and understood nothing but their own ignorance." And just so it happens to some in the progresses of religion; at first they are violent and active, and then they satiate all the appetites of religion; and that which is left is, that they were soon weary, and sat down in displeasure, and return to the world, and dwell in the business of pride or money; and, by this time, they understand that their religion is declined, and passed from the heats and follies of youth to the coldness and infirmities of old age: the remedy of which is only a diligent spirit and a busy religion; a great industry, and a full portion of time in holy offices; that, as the oracle said to the Cirrhæans, *noctes diesque belligerandum*, they could not be happy "unless they waged war night and day;" so unless we perpetually fight against our own vices, and repel our ghostly enemies, and stand on our guard, we must stand for ever in the state of babes in Christ; or else return to the first imperfections of an unchristened soul, and an unsanctified spirit. That is the first particular.

2. The second step of our growth in grace is,—when virtues grow habitual, apt, and easy, in our manners and dispositions; —for, although many new converts have a great zeal, and a busy spirit, apt enough, as they think, to contest against all the difficulties of a spiritual life; yet they meet with such powerful oppositions from without, and a false heart within, that their first heats are soon broken; and either they are for ever

discouraged, or are forced to march more slowly, and proceed more temperately for ever after.

> Τὴν μέντοι κακότητα καὶ ἱλαδὸν ἐστιν ἑλέσθαι
> Ῥηϊδίως, ὀλίγη μὲν ὁδὸς, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει·

"It is an easy thing to commit a wickedness, for temptation and infirmity are always too near us;" but God hath made care and sweat, prudence and diligence, experience and watchfulness, wisdom and labor at home, and good guides abroad, to be instruments and means to purchase virtue.

The way is long, and difficult at first; but in the progress and pursuit, we find all the knots made plain, and the rough ways made smooth.

> ——jam monte potitus
> Ridet————

Now the spirit of grace is like a new soul within him, and he hath new appetites and new pleasures, when the things of the world grow unsavory, and the things of religion are delicious: when his temptations to his old crimes return but seldom, and prevail not at all, but are reproached with a penitential sorrow and speedy amendment: when we do actions of virtue quickly, frequently, and with delight, then we have grown in grace, in the same degree in which they can perceive these excellent dispositions. Some persons there are who dare not sin; they dare not omit their hours of prayer, and they are restless in their spirits till they have done; but they go to it as to execution; they stay from it as long as they can, and they drive, like Pharaoh's chariots, with the wheels off, sadly and heavily; and, besides that, such persons have reserved to themselves the best part of the sacrifice, and do not give their will to God; they do not love him with all their heart; they are also soonest tempted to retire and fall off. Sextius Romanus resigned the honors and offices of the city, and betook himself to the severity of a philosophical life; but when his unusual diet and hard labor began to pinch his flesh, and he felt his propositions smart; and that which was fine in discourse at a symposiac or an academical dinner, began to sit uneasily on him in the practice, he so despaired that he had like to have cast himself

into the sea, to appease the labors of his religion; because he never had gone farther than to think it a fine thing to be a wise man: he would commend it, but he was loth to pay for it at the price that God and the philosopher set on it. But he that is 'grown in grace,' and hath made religion habitual to his spirit, is not at ease but when he is doing the works of the new man: he rests in religion, and comforts his sorrows with thinking of his prayers; and in all crosses of the world he is patient, because his joy is at hand to refresh him when he list, for he cares not so he may serve God; and if you make him poor here, he is rich there; and he counts that to be his proper service, his work, his recreation, and reward.

3. But because in the course of holy living, although the duty be regular and constant, yet the sensible relishes and the flowerings of affection, the zeal and the visible expressions, do not always make the same emission; but sometimes by design, sometimes by order, and sometimes by affection, we are more busy, more intire, and more intent on the actions of religion: in such cases we are to judge of our growth in grace,—if, after every interval of extraordinary piety, the next return be more devout and more affectionate—the labor be more cheerful and more active—and if religion returns oftener, and stays longer in the same expressions, and leaves more satisfaction on the spirit. Are your communions more frequent? and, when they are, do you approach nearer to God? Have you made firmer resolutions, and entertained more hearty purposes of amendment? Do you love God more dutifully, and your neighbor with a greater charity? Do you not so easily return to the world as formerly? Are not you glad when the thing is done? Do you go to your secular accounts with a more warmed affection than before? If you communicate well, it is certain that you will still do it better; if you do not communicate well, every opportunity of doing it is but a new trouble, easily excused, readily omitted; done because it is necessary, but not because we love it; and we shall find that such persons, in their old age, do it worst of all. And it was observed by a Spanish confessor, who was also a famous preacher, that in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made on their death-bed were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition

than all that he had observed them to make in many years before. For so the canes of Egypt, when they newly arise from their bed of mud and slime of Nilus, start up into an equal and continual length, and are interrupted but with few knots, and are strong and beauteous, with great distances and intervals; but when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramid, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body; so are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace. At first, when he springs up from his impurity by the waters of baptism and repentance, he grows straight and strong, and suffers but few interruptions of piety; and his constant courses of religion are but rarely intermitted, till they ascend up to a full age, or towards the ends of their life; then they are weak, and their devotions often intermitted, and their breaches are frequent, and they seek excuses, and labor for dispensations, and love God and religion less and less,—till their old age, instead of a crown of their virtue and perseverance, ends in levity and unprofitable courses; light and useless as the tufted feathers on the cane, every wind can play with it and abuse it, but no man can make it useful. When, therefore, our piety interrupts its greater and more solemn expressions, and, on the return of the greater offices and bigger solemnities, we find them to come on our spirits like the wave of a tide, which retired only because it was natural so to do, and yet came farther on the strand at the next rolling; when every new confession, every succeeding communion, every time of separation for more solemn and intense prayer is better spent, and more affectionate, leaving a greater relish on the spirit, and possessing greater portions of our affections, our reason, and our choice; then we may give God thanks, who hath given us more grace to use that grace, and a blessing to endeavor our duty, and a blessing on our endeavor.

4. To discern our growth in grace, we must inquire concerning our passions, whether they be mortified and quiet, complying with our ends of virtue, and under command; for since the passions are the matter of virtue and vice respectively, he that hath brought into his power all the strengths of the enemy, and the forts from whence he did infest him, he only hath secured

his holy walking with God. But because this thing is never perfectly done, and yet must always be doing, grace grows according as we have finished our portions of this work. And in this we must not only inquire concerning our passions, whether they be sinful and habitually prevalent, for if they be, we are not in the state of grace; but whether they return on us in violences and indecencies, in transportation, and unreasonable and imprudent expressions; for although a good man may be incident to a violent passion, and that without sin, yet a perfect man is not; a well-grown Christian hath seldom such sufferings. To suffer such things sometimes may stand with the being of virtue, but not with its security; for if passions range up and down, and transport us frequently and violently, we may keep in our forts and in our dwellings; but our enemy is master of the field, and our virtues are restrained, and apt to be starved, and will not hold out long. A good man may be spotted with a violence, but a wise man will not; and he that does not add wisdom to his virtue, the knowlege of Jesus Christ to his virtuous habits, will be a good man but till a storm come. But, beyond this, inquire after the state of your passions in actions of religion. Some men fast to mortify their lust, and their fasting makes them peevish; some reprove a vice, but they do it with much impatience; some charitably give excellent counsel, but they do that also with a pompous and proud spirit; and passion, being driven from open hostilities, is forced to march along in the retinue and troops of virtue. And although this be rather a deception and a cozenage than an imperfection, and supposes a state of sin rather than an imperfect grace; yet, because it tacitly and secretly creeps along among the circumstances of pious actions,—as it spoils a virtue in some, so it lessens it in others, and therefore is considerable also in this question.

And although no man must take accounts of his being in or out of the state of grace, by his being dispassionate, and free from all the assaults of passion; yet, as to the securing his being in the state of grace, he must provide that he be not a slave of passion: so, to declare his growth in grace, he must be sure to take the measures of his affections, and see that they be lessened, more apt to be suppressed; not breaking out to incon-

venience and imprudences; not rifling our spirit, and drawing us from our usual and more sober tempers. Try, therefore, if your fear be turned into caution; your lust into chaste friendships; your imperious spirit into prudent government; your revenge into justice; your anger into charity; and your peevishness and rage into silence and suppression of language. Is our ambition changed into virtuous and noble thoughts? Can we emulate without envy? Is our covetousness lessened into good husbandry, and mingled with alms, that we may certainly discern the love of money to be gone? Do we leave to despise our inferiors? and can we willingly endure to admit him that excels us in any gift or grace whatsoever, and to commend it without abatement, and mingling allays with the commendation, and disparagements to the man? If we be arrived but thus far, it is well, and we must go farther. But we use to think that all disaffections of the body are removed, if they be changed into the more tolerable, although we have not an athletic health, or the strength of porters or wrestlers. For although it be felicity to be quit of all passion that may be sinful or violent, and part of the happiness of heaven shall consist in that freedom; yet our growth in grace consists in the remission and lessening of our passions: only he that is incontinent in his lust or in his anger; in his desires of money or of honor; in his revenge or in his fear; in his joys or in his sorrows; that man is not grown at all in the grace and knowlege of our Lord Jesus Christ. This only: in the scrutiny and consequent judgment concerning our passions, it will concern the curiosity of our care to watch against passions in the reflex act, against pride or lust; complacency and peevishness attending on virtue. For he was noted for a vain person, who, being overjoyed for the cure (as he thought) of his pride, cried out to his wife; *Cerne, Dionysia, deposui fastum;* "Behold, I have laid aside all my pride:" and of that very dream the silly man thought he had reason to boast; but considered not that it was an act of pride and levity besides. If thou hast given a noble present to thy friend; if thou hast rejected the unjust desire of thy prince; if thou hast endured thirst and hunger for religion or continence; if thou hast refused an offer like that which was made to Joseph; sit down and rest in thy good conscience, and do not please thy-

self in opinions and fantastic noises abroad; and do not despise him that did not do so as thou hast done, and reprove no man with an upbraiding circumstance; for it will give thee but an ill return, and a contemptible reward, if thou shalt overlay thy infant virtue, or drown it with a flood of breast-milk.

SERMON VII.

PART II.

5. He is well grown in or towards the state of grace, who is more patient of a sharp reproof than of a secret flattery. For a reprehension contains so much mortification to the pride and complacencies of a man, is so great an affront to an easy and undisturbed person, is so empty of pleasure and so full of profit, that he must needs love virtue in a great degree, who can take in that which only serves her end, and is displeasant to himself and all his gaieties. A severe reprehender of another's vice comes dressed like Jacob, when he went to cozen his brother of the blessing; his outside is 'rough and hairy,' but 'the voice is Jacob's voice:' rough hands and a healthful language get the blessing, even against the will of him that shall feel it; but he that is patient and even, not apt to excuse his fault, that is less apt to anger, or to scorn him that snatches him rudely from the flames of hell, he is virtue's confessor, and suffers these lesser stripes for that interest, which will end in spiritual and eternal benedictions.

They who are furious against their monitors, are incorrigible: but it is one degree of meekness to suffer discipline; and a meek man cannot easily be an ill man, especially in the present instance; he appears, at least, to have a healthful constitution; he hath good flesh to heal; his spirit is capable of medicine; and that man can never be despaired of, who hath a disposition so near his health as to improve all physic, and whose nature

is relieved from every good accident from without. But that which I observe is, that this is not only a good disposition towards repentance and restitution, but is a sign of growth in grace, according as it becomes natural, easy, and habitual. Some men chide themselves for all their misdemeanors, because they would be represented to the censures and opinions of other men with a fair character, and such as need not to be reproved: others, out of inconsideration, sleep in their own dark rooms, and, until the charity of a guide or of a friend draws the curtain, and lets in a beam of light, dream on, until the grave opens, and hell devours them: but if they be called on by the grace of God, let down with a sheet of counsels and friendly precepts, they are presently inclined to be obedient to the heavenly monitions; but unless they be dressed with circumstances of honor and civility, with arts of entertainment and insinuation, they are rejected utterly, or received unwillingly. Therefore, although on any terms to endure a sharp reproof be a good sign of amendment, yet the growth of grace is not properly signified by every such sufferance: for when this disposition begins, amendment also begins, and goes on in proportion to the increment of this. To endure a reproof without adding a new sin is the first step to amendment; that is, to endure it without scorn, or hatred, or indignation. 2. The next is to suffer reproof without excusing ourselves; for he that is apt to excuse himself, is only desirous, in a civil manner, to set the reproof aside, and to represent the charitable monitor to be too hasty in his judgment, and deceived in his information; and the fault to dwell there, not with himself. 3. Then he that proceeds in this instance, admits the reprover's sermon or discourse without a private regret: he hath no secret murmurs or unwillingnesses to the humiliation, but is only ashamed that he should deserve it; but for the reprehension itself, that troubles him not, but he looks on it as his own medicine, and the other's charity. 4. But if to this he adds, that he voluntarily confesses his own fault, and, of his own accord, vomits out the loads of his own intemperance, and eases his spirit of the infection; then it is certain he is not only a professed and hearty enemy against sin, but a zealous, and a prudent, and an active person against all its interest; and never counts himself

at ease but while he rests on the banks of Sion, or at the gates of the temple; never pleased but in virtue and religion: then he knows the state of his soul and the state of his danger; he reckons it no abjection to be abased in the face of man, so he may be gracious in the eyes of God: and that is a sign of a good grace and a holy wisdom; that man is 'grown in the grace of God, and in the knowlege of our Lord Jesus Christ.' *Justus in principio sermonis est accusator sui*, said the wise man; 'The righteous accuseth himself in the beginning;' that is, quickly, lest he be prevented. And certain it is, he cannot be either wise or good, that had rather have a real sin within him, than that a good man should believe him to be a repenting sinner; that had rather keep his crime than lose his reputation; that is, rather to be so than to be thought so; rather be without the favor of God than of his neighbor. Diogenes once spied a young man coming out of a tavern or place of entertainment, who, perceiving himself observed by the philosopher, with some confusion stepped back again, that he might, if possible, preserve his fame with that severe person. But Diogenes told him, *Quanto magis intraveris, tanto magis eris in caupona:* "The more you go back, the longer you are in the place where you are ashamed to be seen." And he that conceals his sin, still retains that which he counts his shame and his burden. Hippocrates was noted for an ingenuous person, that he published and confessed his error concerning the sutures of the head: and all ages since St. Austin have called him pious, for writing his book of retractations, in which he published his former ignorances and mistakes, and so set his shame off to the world invested with a garment of modesty, and above half changed before they were seen. I did the rather insist on this particular, because it is a consideration of huge concernment, and yet much neglected in all its instances and degrees. We neither confess our shame nor endure it; we are privately troubled, and publicly excuse it; we turn charity into bitterness, and our reproof into contumacy and scorn; and who is there amongst us that can endure a personal charge, or is not to be taught his personal duty by general discoursings, by parable and apologue, by acts of insinuation and wary distances? But by this state of persons we know the estate of our own spirits.

When God sent his prophets to the people, and 'they stoned them with stones, and sawed them asunder, and cast them into dungeons, and made them beggars,' the people fell into the condition of Babylon, *Quam curavimus, et non est sanata:* "We healed her," said the prophets, "but she would not be cured:" *Derelinquamus eam*, that is her doom; let her enjoy her sins, and all the fruits of sin laid up in treasures of wrath against the day of vengeance and retribution.

6. He that is grown in grace and the knowlege of Christ esteems no sin to be little or contemptible, none fit to be cherished or indulged. For it is not only inconsistent with the love of God, to entertain any indecency or beginning of a crime, any thing that displeases him; but he always remembers how much it cost him to arrive at the state of good things, whither the grace of God hath already brought him: he thinks of his prayers and tears, his restless nights and his daily fears, his late escape and his present danger, the ruins of his former state, and the difficulty and imperfect reparations of this new, his proclivity and aptness to vice, and natural averseness and uneasy inclinations to the strictness of holy living; and when these are considered truly, they naturally make a man unwilling to entertain any beginnings of a state of life contrary to that, which, with so much danger and difficulty, through so many objections and enemies, he hath attained. And the truth is, when a man hath escaped the dangers of his first state of sin, he cannot but be extremely unwilling to return again thither, in which he can never hope for heaven. And so it must be; for a man must not flatter himself in a small crime, and say, as Lot did, when he begged a reprieve for Zoar, 'Alas! Lord, is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' And it is not, therefore, to be entertained because it is little; for it is the more without excuse, if it be little: the temptations to it are not great, the allurements not mighty, the promises not insnaring, the resistance easy; and a wise man considers it is a greater danger to be overcome by a little sin, than by a great one: a greater danger, I say; not directly, but accidentally; not in respect of the crime, but in relation to the person: for he that cannot overcome a small crime, is in the state of infirmity so great, that he perishes infallibly, when he is arrested

by the sins of a stronger temptation: but he that easily can, and yet will not, he is in love with sin, and courts his danger, that he may at least kiss the apples of paradise, or feast himself with the parings, since he is, by some displeasing instrument, affrighted from glutting himself with the forbidden fruit in ruder and bigger instances. But the well-grown Christian is curious of his newly-trimmed soul; and, like a nice person with clean clothes, is careful that no spot or stain sully the virgin whiteness of his robe; whereas another, whose albs of baptism are sullied in many places with the smoke and filth of Sodom and uncleanness, cares not in what paths he treads; and a shower of dirt changes not his state, who already lies wallowing in the puddles of impurity. It makes men negligent and easy, when they have an opinion, or certain knowlege, that they are persons extraordinary in nothing, that a little care will not mend them, that another sin cannot make them much worse: but it is a sign of a tender conscience and a reformed spirit, when it is sensible of every alteration, when an idle word is troublesome, when a wandering thought puts the whole spirit on its guard, when too free a merriment is wiped off with a sigh, and a sad thought, and a severe recollection, and a holy prayer. Polycletus was wont to say, "that they had work enough to do, who were to make a curious picture of clay and dirt, when they were to take accounts for the handling of mud and mortar." A man's spirit is naturally careless of baser and uncostly materials; but if a man be to work in gold, then he will save the filings of his dust, and suffer not a grain to perish: and when a man hath laid his foundations in precious stones, he will not build vile matter, stubble, and dirt, on it. So it is in the spirit of a man; if he have built on the rock, Christ Jesus, and is grown up to a good stature in Christ, he will not easily dishonor his building, or lose his labors, by an incurious entertainment of vanities and little instances of sin; which as they can never satisfy any lust or appetite to sin, so they are like a fly in a box of ointment, or like little follies to a wise man; they are extremely full of dishonor and disparagement, they disarray a man's soul of his virtue, and dishonor him for cockle-shells and baubles, and tempt to a greater folly; which every man, who is grown in the knowlege of Christ, therefore care-

fully avoids, because he fears a relapse with a fear as great as his hopes of heaven are; and knows that the entertainment of small sins does but intice a man's resolutions to disband; they unravel and untwist his holy purposes, and begin in infirmities, and proceed in folly, and end in death.

7. He that is grown in grace, pursues virtue for its own interest, purely and simply, without the mixture and allay of collateral designs and equally-inclining purposes. God, in the beginning of our returns to him, entertains us with promises and threatenings, the apprehensions of temporal advantages, with fear and shame, and with reverence of friends and secular respects, with reputation and coercion of human laws; and at first, men snatch at the lesser and lower ends of virtue; and such rewards as are visible, and which God sometimes gives in hand, to entertain our weak and imperfect desires. The young philosophers were very forward to get the precepts of their sect, and the rules of severity, that they might discourse with kings, not that they might reform their own manners; and some men study to get the ears and tongues of the people, rather than to gain their souls to God; and they obey good laws for fear of punishment, or to preserve their own peace; and some are worse, they do good deeds out of spite, and 'preach Christ out of envy,' or to lessen the authority and fame of others. Some of these lessen the excellency of the act, others spoil it quite: it is in some imperfect, in others criminal; in some it is consistent with a beginning infant grace, in others it is an argument of the state of sin and death; but in all cases, the well-grown Christian, he that improves or goes forward in his way to heaven, brings virtue forth, not into discourses and panegyrics, but into his life and manners. His virtue, although it serves many good ends accidentally, yet, by his intention, it only suppresses his inordinate passions, makes him temperate and chaste, casts out his devils of drunkenness and lust, pride and rage, malice and revenge; it makes him useful to his brother and a servant of God. And although these flowers cannot choose but please his eye and delight his smell, yet he chooses to gather honey, and licks up the dew of heaven, and feasts his spirit on the manna, and dwells not in the collateral usages and accidental sweetnesses, which dwell at the gates of

other senses; but, like a bee, loads his thighs with wax and his bag with honey, that is, with the useful parts of virtue, in order to holiness and felicity; of which the best signs and notices we can take, will be;—if we as earnestly pursue virtues which are acted in private, as those whose scene lies in public; if we pray in private, under the only eye of God and his ministering angels, as in churches; if we give our alms in secret rather than in public; if we take more pleasure in the just satisfaction of our consciences, than securing our reputation; if we rather pursue innocence than seek an excuse; if we desire to please God, though we lose our fame with men; if we be just to the poorest servant as to the greatest prince; if we choose to be among the jewels of God, though we be the περικαθάρματα, 'the off-scouring' of the world; if, when we are secure from witnesses and accusers, and not obnoxious to the notices of the law, we think ourselves obliged by conscience and practice, and live accordingly: then our services and intentions in virtue are right; then we are past the twilights of conversion, and the umbrages of the world, and walk in the light of God, of his word, and of his Spirit, of grace and reason, as becometh not babes, but men in Christ Jesus. In this progress of grace I have not yet expressed, that perfect persons should serve God out of mere love of God and the divine excellences, without the considerations of either heaven or hell; such a thing as that is talked of in mystical theology. And I doubt not but many good persons come to that growth of charity, that the goodness and excellency of God are more incumbent and actually pressing on their spirit than any considerations of reward. But then I shall add this, that when persons come to that height of grace, or contemplation rather, and they love God for himself, and do their duties in order to the fruition of him and his pleasure; all that is but heaven in another sense, and under another name; just as the mystical theology is the highest duty, and the choicest part of obedience under a new method. But in order to the present, that which I call a signification of our growth in grace is, a pursuance of virtue on such reasons as are propounded to us as motives in Christianity, (such as are to glorify God, and to enjoy his promises in the way and in our country, to avoid the displeasure of God, and to be united

to his glories ;) and then to exercise virtue in such parts and to such purposes as are useful to good life, and profitable to our neighbors; not to such only where they serve reputation or secular ends. For though the great Physician of our souls hath mingled profits and pleasures with virtue, to make its chalice sweet and apt to be drunk off; yet he that takes out the sweet ingredient, and feasts his palate with the less wholesome part, because it is delicious, serves a low end of sense or interest, but serves not God at all, and as little does benefit to his soul. Such a person is like Homer's bird, deplumes himself to feather all the naked callows that he sees, and holds a taper that may light others to heaven, while he burns his own fingers: but a well grown person, out of habit and choice, out of love and virtue and just intention, goes on his journey in straight ways to heaven, even when the bridle and coercion of laws, or the spurs of interest or reputation, are laid aside; and desires witnesses of his actions, not that he may advance his fame, but for reverence and fear, and to make it still more necessary to do holy things.

8. Some men there are in the beginning of their holy walking with God, and while they are babes in Christ, who are presently busied in delights of prayers, and rejoice in public communion, and count all solemn assemblies festival; but as they are pleased with them, so they can easily be without them. It is a sign of a common and vulgar love, only to be pleased with the company of a friend, and to be as well without him: *Amoris at morsum qui vere senserit*, "He that has felt the sting of a sharp and very dear affection," is impatient in the absence of his beloved object: the soul that is sick and swallowed up with holy fire, loves nothing else; all pleasures else seem unsavory; company is troublesome, visitors are tedious, homilies of comfort are flat and useless. The pleasures of virtue to a good and perfect man, are not like the perfumes of nard-pistic, which is very delightful when the box is newly broken, but the want of it is no trouble, we are well enough without it: but virtue is like hunger and thirst, it must be satisfied or we die. And when we feel great longings after religion, and faintings for want of holy nutriment, when a famine of the word and sacraments is more intolerable, and we think

ourselves really most miserable when the church-doors are shut against us, or like the Christians, in the persecution of the Vandals, who thought it worse than death that their bishops were taken from them: if we understand excommunication or church censures, (abating the disreputation and secular appendages) in the sense of the Spirit, to be a misery next to hell itself; then we have made a good progress in the charity and grace of God: till then we are but pretenders, or infants, or imperfect, in the same degree in which our affections are cold and our desires remiss. For a constant and prudent zeal is the best testimony of our masculine and vigorous heats, and an hour of fervor is more pleasing to God than a month of lukewarmness and indifference.

9. But as some are active only in the presence of a good object, but remiss and careless for the want of it; so, on the other side, an infant-grace is safe in the absence of a temptation, but falls easily when it is in presence. He, therefore, that would understand if he be grown in grace, may consider if his safety consists only in peace, or in the strength of the Spirit. It is good that we will not seek out opportunities to sin; but are not we too apprehensive of it, when it is presented? or do we not sink under it when it presses us? Can we hold our tapers near the flame, and not suck it in greedily like naphtha or prepared nitre? or can we, like the children of the captivity, walk in the midst of flames, and not be scorched or consumed? Many men will not, like Judah, go into highways, and untie the girdles of harlots; but can you reject the importunity of a beauteous and an imperious lady, as Joseph did? We had need pray that we be 'not led into temptation;' that is, not only into the possession, but not into the allurements and neighborhood of it, lest by little and little our strongest resolutions be untwist, and crack in sunder, like an easy cord severed into single threads; but if we, by the necessity of our lives and manner of living, dwell where a temptation will assault us, then to resist is the sign of a great grace; but such a sign, that without it the grace turns to wantonness, and the man into a beast, and an angel into a devil. R. Moses will not allow a man to be a true penitent, until he hath left all his sin, and in all the like circumstances refuses those temptations,

under which formerly he sinned and died; and indeed it may happen, that such a trial only can secure our judgment concerning ourselves. And although to be tried in all the same accidents be not safe, nor always contingent, and in such cases it is sufficient to resist all the temptations we have, and avoid the rest, and decree against all;—yet if it please God we are tempted, as David was by his eyes, or the martyrs by tortures, or Joseph by his wanton mistress, then to stand sure, and to ride on the temptation like a ship on a wave, or to stand like a rock in an impetuous storm, that is the sign of a great grace, and of a well-grown Christian.

10. No man is grown in grace but he that is ready for every work, that chooses not his employment, that refuses no imposition from God or his superior. A ready hand, an obedient heart, and a willing cheerful soul, in all the work of God, and in every office of religion, is a great index of a good proficient in the ways of godliness. The heart of a man is like a wounded hand or arm, which, if it be so cured that it can only move one way, and cannot turn to all postures and natural uses, it is but imperfect, and still half in health and half wounded: so is our spirit; if it be apt for prayer and close-fisted in alms, if it be sound in faith and dead in charity, if it be religious to God and unjust to our neighbor, there wants some integral part, or there is a lameness; and 'the deficiency in any one duty implies the guilt of all,' said St. James; and, *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex qualibet particulari:* every fault spoils a grace, but one grace alone cannot make a good man. But as to be universal in our obedience is necessary to the being in the state of grace, so, readily to change employment from the better to the worse, from the honorable to the poor, from useful to seemingly unprofitable, is a good character of a well-grown Christian, if he takes the worst part with indifference, and a spirit equally choosing all the events of the divine providence. Can you be content to descend from ruling of a province to the keeping of a herd, from the work of an Apostle to be confined in a prison, from disputing before princes to a conversation with shepherds? Can you be willing to all that God is willing, and suffer all that he chooses, as willingly as if you had chosen your own fortune? In the same degree in which you can conform to God,

in the same you have approached towards that perfection, whither we must, by degrees, arrive, in our journey towards heaven.

This is not to be expected of beginners; for they must be inticed with apt employments; and it may be, their office and work so fits their spirits, that it makes them first in love with it, and then with God for giving it. And many a man goes to heaven in the days of peace, whose faith, and hope, and patience would have been dashed in pieces, if he had fallen into a storm of persecution. 'Oppression will make a wise man mad,' saith Solomon: there are some usages that will put a sober person out of all patience, such which are besides the customs of this life, and contrary to all his hopes, and unworthy of a person of his quality. And when Nero durst not die, yet when his servants told him that the senators had condemned him to be put to death, *more majorum*, that is, "by scourging like a slave," he was forced into preternatural confidence, and fell on his own sword. But when God so changes thy estate, that thou art fallen into accidents, to which thou art no otherwise disposed but by grace and a holy spirit, and yet thou canst pass through them with quietness, and do the work of suffering as well as the works of prosperous employment;—this is an argument of a great grace and an extraordinary spirit. For many persons, in a change of fortune, perish, who, if they had still been prosperous, had gone to prison, being tempted in a persecution to perjuries, and apostasy, and unhandsome compliances, and hypocrisy, and irreligion; and many men are brought to virtue, and to God, and to felicity, by being persecuted and made unprosperous. And these are effects of a more absolute and irrespective predestination. But when the grace of God is great and prudent, and masculine, and well-grown, it is unaltered in all changes; save only that every accident that is new and violent, brings him nearer to God, and makes him, with greater caution and severity, to dwell in virtue.

11. Lastly; some there are who are firm in all great and foreseen changes, and have laid up in the storehouses of the spirit,—reason and religion,—arguments and discourses enough to defend them against all violences, and stand at watch so much, that they are safe where they can consider and deli-

berate; but there may be something wanting yet; and in the direct line, and in the straight progress to heaven, I call that an infallible sign of a great grace, and indeed the greatest degree of a great grace, when a man is prepared against sudden invasions of the spirit, surreptitious and extemporary assaults. Many a valiant person dares fight a battle, who yet will be timorous and surprised in a midnight alarm, or if he falls into a river. And how many discreet persons are there, who, if you offer them a sin, and give them time to consider, and tell them of it beforehand, will rather die than be perjured, or tell a deliberate lie, or break a promise; who, it may be, tell many sudden lies, and excuse themselves, and break their promises, and yet think themselves safe enough, and sleep without either affrightments or any apprehension of dishonor done to their persons or their religion! Every man is not armed for all sudden arrests of passions. Few men have cast such fetters on their lusts, and have their passions in so strict confinement, that they may not be overrun with a midnight flood or an unlooked-for inundation. He that does not start when he is smitten suddenly, is a constant person. And that is it which I intend in this instance; that he is a perfect man, and well-grown in grace, who hath so habitual a resolution, and so unhasty and wary a spirit, as that he decrees on no act before he hath considered maturely, and changed the sudden occasion into a sober counsel. David, by chance, spied Bathsheba washing herself; and, being surprised, gave his heart away before he could consider; and when it was once gone, it was hard to recover it: and sometimes a man is betrayed by a sudden opportunity, and all things fitted for his sin ready at the door; the act stands in all its dress, and will not stay for an answer; and inconsideration is the defence and guard of the sin, and makes that his conscience can the more easily swallow it: what shall the man do then? Unless he be strong by his old strengths, by a great grace, by an habitual virtue, and a sober unmoved spirit,—he falls and dies the death, and hath no new strengths but such as are to be employed for his recovery; none for his present guard, unless on the old stock, and if he be a well-grown Christian.

These are the parts, acts, and offices of our growing in grace;

and yet I have sometimes called them signs: but they are signs, as eating and drinking are signs of life; they are signs so as also they are parts of life: and these are parts of our growth in grace, so that a man can grow in grace to no other purpose but to these or the like improvements.

Concerning which I have a caution or two to interpose. 1. The growth of grace is to be estimated as other moral things are, not according to the growth of things natural. Grace does not grow by observation, and a continual efflux, and a constant proportion; and a man cannot call himself to an account for the growth of every day, or week, or month; but in the greater portions of our life, in which we have had many occasions and instances to exercise and improve our virtues, we may call ourselves to account; but it is a snare to our consciences to be examined in the growth of grace in every short revolution of solemn duty, as against every communion or great festival.

2. Growth in grace is not always to be discerned, either in single instances or in single graces. Not in single instances: for every time we are to exercise a virtue, we are not in the same natural dispositions, nor do we meet with the same circumstances; and it is not always necessary that the next acts should be more earnest and intense than the former: all single acts are to be done after the manner of men, and therefore are not always capable of increasing, and they have their times, beyond which they cannot easily swell; and therefore, if it be a good act and zealous, it may proceed from a well-grown grace; and yet a younger and weaker person may do some acts as great and as religious as it. But neither do single graces always afford a regular and certain judgment in this affair. For some persons, at the first, had rather die than be unchaste or perjured; and 'greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life' for God: he cannot easily grow in the substance of that act; and if other persons, or himself, in process of time, do it more cheerfully, or with fewer fears, it is not always a sign of a greater grace, but sometimes of greater collateral assistances, or a better habit of body, or more fortunate circumstances; for he that goes to the block trembling for Christ, and yet endures his death certainly, and endures his trembling too, and runs through all his infirmities and the bigger temptations,

looks not so well many times in the eyes of men, but suffers more for God, than those confident martyrs that courted death in the primitive church; and therefore may be much dearer in the eyes of God. But that which I say in this particular is, that a smallness in one is not an argument of the imperfection of the whole estate; because God does not always give to every man occasions to exercise, and therefore not to improve, every grace; and the passive virtues of a Christian are not to be expected to grow so fast in prosperous as in suffering Christians. But in this case we are to take accounts of ourselves by the improvement of those graces which God makes to happen often in our lives; such as are charity and temperance in young men; liberality and religion in aged persons; ingenuity and humility in scholars; justice in merchants and artificers; forgiveness of injuries in great men and persons tempted by law-suits: for since virtues grow like other moral habits, by use, diligence, and assiduity,—there where God hath appointed our work and our instances, there we must consider concerning our growth in grace; in other things we are but beginners. But it is not likely that God will try us concerning degrees hereafter, in such things, of which, in this world, he was sparing to give us opportunities.

3. Be careful to observe that these rules are not all to be understood negatively, but positively and affirmatively: that is, that a man may conclude that he is grown in grace, if he observes these characters in himself, which I have here discoursed of; but he must not conclude negatively, that he is not grown in grace, if he cannot observe such signal testimonies: for sometimes God covers the graces of his servants, and hides the beauty of his tabernacle with goats' hair and the skins of beasts, that he may rather suffer them to want present comfort than the grace of humility. For it is not necessary to preserve the gaieties and their spiritual pleasures; but if their humility fails (which may easily be under the sun-shine of conspicuous and illustrious graces), their virtues and themselves perish in a sad declension. But sometimes men have not skill to make a judgment; and all this discourse seems too artificial to be tried by, in the hearty purposes of religion. Sometimes they let pass much of their life, even of their better days, without observance

of particulars; sometimes their cases of conscience are intricate, or allayed with unavoidable infirmities; sometimes they are so uninstructed in the more secret parts of religion, and there are so many illusions and accidental miscarriages, that if we shall conclude negatively in the present question, we may produce scruples infinite, but understand nothing more of our estate, and do much less of our duty.

4. In considering concerning our growth in grace, let us take more care to consider matters that concern justice and charity, than that concern the virtue of religion; because in this there may be much, in the other there cannot easily be any, illusion and cozenage. That is a good religion that believes, and trusts, and hopes in God, through Jesus Christ, and for his sake does all justice and all charity that he can; and our blessed Lord gives no other description of love to God, but obedience and 'keeping his commandments.' Justice and charity are like the matter, religion is the form, of Christianity: but although the form be more noble and the principle of life, yet it is less discernible, less material, and less sensible; and we judge concerning the form by the matter, and by material accidents, and by actions: and so we must of our religion, that is, of our love to God, and of the efficacy of our prayers, and the usefulness of our fastings; we must make our judgments by the more material parts of our duty, that is, by sobriety, and by justice, and by charity.

I am much prevented in my intention for the perfecting of this so very material consideration: I shall therefore only tell you, that to these parts and actions of a good life, or of our growth in grace, some have added some accidental considerations, which are rather signs than parts of it. Such are, 1. to praise all good things, and to study to imitate what we praise: 2. to be impatient that any man should excel us; not out of envy to the person, but of noble emulation to the excellency. For so Themistocles could not sleep, after the great victory at Marathon purchased by Miltiades, till he had made himself illustrious by equal services to his country: 3. the bearing of sickness patiently, and ever with improvement, and the addition of some excellent principle, and the firm pursuing it: 4. great devotion, and much delight in our prayers: 5. frequent in-

spirations, and often whispers, of the Spirit of God, prompting us to devotion and obedience; especially if we add to this a constant and ready obedience to all those holy invitations: 6. offering peace to them that have injured me, and the abating of the circumstances of honor or of right, when either justice or charity is concerned in it: 7. love to the brethren: 8. to behold our companions, or our inferiors, full of honor and fortune; and if we sit still at home and murmur not, or if we can rejoice both in their honor and our own quiet, that is a fair work of a good man. And now, 9. after all this, I will not trouble you with reckoning a freedom from being tempted, not only from being overcome, but from being tried: for though that be a rare felicity, and hath in it much safety; yet it hath less honor, and fewer instances of virtue, unless it proceed from a confirmed and heroical grace; which is indeed a little image of heaven and of a celestial charity, and never happens signally to any, but to old and very eminent persons. 10. But some also add an excellent habit of body and material passions, such as are chaste and virtuous dreams; and suppose, that, as a disease abuses the fancy, and a vice does prejudice it, so may an excellent virtue of the soul smooth and calcine the body, and make it serve perfectly, and without rebellious indispositions. 11. Others are in love with Mary Magdalen's tears, and fancy the hard knees of St. James, and the sore eyes of St. Peter, and the very recreations of St. John; *Proh! quam virtute præditos omnia decent!* thinking "all things become a good man," even his gestures and little incuriosities. And though this may proceed from a great love of virtue, yet because some men do thus much and no more, and this is to be attributed to the lustre of virtue, which shines a little through a man's eyelids, though he perversely winks against the light; yet (as the former of these two is too metaphysical, so is the latter too fantastical,) he that, by the foregoing material parts and proper significations of a growing grace, does not understand his own condition, must be content to work on still *super totam materiam*, without considerations of particulars; he must pray earnestly and watch diligently, and consult with prudent guides, and ask of God great measures of his Spirit, and 'hunger and thirst after righteousness:' for he that does so, shall certainly 'be satis-

fied.' And if he understands not his present good condition, yet if he be not wanting in the downright endeavors of piety, and in hearty purposes, he shall then find that he is grown in grace, when he springs up in the resurrection of the just, and shall be ingrafted on a tree of paradise, which beareth fruit for ever, glory to God, rejoicing to saints and angels, and eternal felicity to his own pious, though undiscerning soul. *Prima sequentem, honestum est in secundis aut tertiis consistere.**

* Cicero.

END OF VOL. II.

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